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THE RIDDLE OF JUTLAND

THE RIDDLE OF JUTLAND

AN AUTHENTIC HISTORY

By
LANGHORNE GIBSON
and
VICE-ADMIRAL J. E. T. HARPER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
SIR ARCHIBALD HURD

Fourteen Diagrams



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FOREWORD

EIGHTEEN years have passed since the Battle of Jutland, and at last the action can be seen as an occasion in its own right—the most important high light in a long naval war, and an incident in world history whose effects reached far beyond the physical sea area in which the two fleets fought.

Jutland was a predestined event, foretold by innumerable far-seeing minds, but the exact form which the battle took was at odds with all speculations and prophecies.

No event of the war era has been more clouded by inaccurate legend and report. Opposing admirals themselves remained ignorant of each other's detailed tactics and movements until long after the conflict was over, while military censorship withheld the facts of the battle from public knowledge for nearly a decade.

During that time many false versions, based upon conjecture and partisanship, found wide circulation and belief, until the truth about Jutland became a mystery.

The authors' wish has been to present an unbiased, accurate and clear narrative of the Battle of Jutland—its causes, its details and its aftermath—based upon thorough investigation into both the British and German records, and intended alike for seafarers and for people who know nothing of the sea but have felt the echo of the battle's high drama sounding through the years.

L. G.

J. E. T. H.

September, 1934.

INTRODUCTION

to the reputations of officers of high rank, may be subject to review, but, however partisans may attempt to tone down the terms of praise or blame, the record remains—a recital of events, small as well as great, which cannot be disputed. This volume is the stuff of which history for all future generations is made. It clears away the mists which for these long years have screened the battle of Jutland, as it was actually fought, from the impartial judgment of the man in the street, who has so anxiously awaited the truth and nothing but the truth.

The battle of Jutland, as this volume reveals, had three phases. The first was the meeting of the British and German battle-cruiser fleets under Beatty and von Hipper. The Germans gained no mean advantage over superior forces. Those forces would have been even more superior if the fast battleship division which Admiral Evan-Thomas handled with such conspicuous ability in the later stages of the action, had not been, owing to the speed at which the battle-cruisers were ordered to steam, so far in the rear as to be out of range of the enemy when he was sighted.

There has been a tendency to overlook the fact that Jellicoe, as Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, had placed at Beatty's disposal a force of four of the swiftest battleships in support of his six battle-cruisers. When the latter encountered von Hipper, the German admiral had under his orders only five battle-cruisers, so that the odds would have been two to one numerically in favour of the British admiral during the initial contact with the enemy *if* the battleships had been given a chance to take their share in the fighting. In the result, not only were two of the British battle-cruisers sunk, but the other battle-cruisers, also under Beatty's immediate orders, were more seriously damaged than were the German ships, for reasons this volume makes plain.

Fortunately the untoward events of the afternoon had a sequel when Beatty, with his diminished forces, fell back, with Evan-Thomas's four battleships as an effective protection, on Jellicoe's six columns of battleships which were steaming

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down from the North, not knowing, owing to the failure of intelligence, where the enemy would be found.

In the course of minutes, indeed seconds, Jellicoe had to decide on the manner of the deployment of his vast armada into line of battle. At that moment the fate of the British Fleet, of the British Empire, of the Allied cause, and of civilization depended on the clear tactical vision of this one man. He did the quickest bit of thinking since man became an intelligent creature. His orders for forming his six columns into one single line so as to bring the maximum fire to bear at once on the enemy was the inspiration of genius.

In the result the Grand Fleet crossed the "T" of the German battle squadrons so effectively that their complete annihilation, even in the failing light (for it was after six o'clock when this second phase opened), was only averted by retreat. Twice more the High Sea Fleet, with splendid daring, attempted to break through the imponderable and impenetrable barrier of shell-fire which stood between Scheer and his base. The German Commander-in-Chief at last realized that continuance of these tactics meant overwhelming defeat. With a sure perception of the dire possibilities of the situation, he decided to break off the action. He was favoured by three fortuitous allies, the failing daylight, the mist that lay over the waters, and the smoke of the guns.

As the first phase of the battle had left the honours with the Germans, the second phase, developing under the master hand of the British Navy's greatest strategist and tactician, left Scheer, with his crippled fleet, only one hope and desire—home. Jellicoe remained in undisputed command of the sea, not one of his battleships having been injured beyond further instant service. Scheer, on the other hand, during this phase of the battle suffered the loss of a battleship and a battle-cruiser and most of his other units were so crippled that it was not until after a long interval that what remained of the High Sea Fleet was again ready for sea. Nearly a dozen of the most important ships were seriously injured: the *Von der Tann*, the

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Grosser Kurfürst and the *Ostfriesland* did not leave the dock-yard until July; the work on the *König* was not finished until August 3; that on the *Moltke* not until August 7, while the dates of completion for the *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* were September 16 and November 3 respectively.

The third phase of the battle opened with the oncoming of night. But for the failure at the Admiralty to transmit to Jellicoe, instantly and without emendation, the wireless intelligence which had reached Whitehall from the direction-finding stations of the course Scheer was taking, his retreat would almost certainly have been cut off; Jutland, like Trafalgar, might have been a battle of annihilation; June 1st, 1916, would have been for ever printed in red letters in the calendar of the British Navy. Small events have great consequences in war as in peace.

Scheer by his handling of his fleet when defeat seemed certain, became the hero of the averted disaster; Jellicoe was robbed of the halo which Nelson had won in his time, not by any failure on his part, but by the lack of information which would have enabled him to sweep the whole of the High Sea Fleet to complete destruction.

Was Jutland, in spite of untoward incidents, a British victory? A victory is not to be judged by the extent of the injury inflicted by one side on the other, but by the influence of a battle on subsequent events. The High Sea Fleet ceased from the time it reached the safe anchorage of Wilhelmshaven to have any influence on the war by sea or by land or by air. It was as powerless as though it had been annihilated, except to this extent—that its mere inactivity imposed on the Grand Fleet a continuous watch and ward in the North Sea. Ships and personnel which could have been used to better advantage elsewhere were immobilized. On the other hand, from being a source of potential strength to the Central Powers, the High Sea Fleet, became, as the months dragged on, a source of weakness. It had sustained heavy losses, but more vital was the loss of its fighting spirit. When at length it was ordered once more to face the shell fire of the Grand Fleet, in a last

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hopeless effort to regain its prestige, the "do or die ordeal" was so unwelcome to the crews that they mutinied.

The German defeat at sea was the beginning of the end. It infected the nation, which had reposed such complete confidence in the Fleet. The revolution of 1918 was the bitter fruit of the defeat of Jutland—of the pressure of the blockade and not of the reverses sustained on land. If Jellicoe had not triumphed in the fading light of May 31, 1916, would there have been a naval mutiny, followed by the collapse of the Central Powers, the signing of the armistice, the surrender of the splendid ships, in the building of which the Kaiser Wilhelm II had taken such pride, and, at last, the greatest of all indignities to the German flag, the scuttling of Scheer's men-of-war, with their honourable record of battle against heavy odds, in the silent waters on which the Grand Fleet had ridden in power and dignity since it had been moulded to its high purpose under the hand of Jellicoe? That is the conclusive inquiry of history.

It has been well said that the first law of history is that it shall dare to state anything that is false and consequently that it shall not shrink from stating anything that is true. That is the test which will be applied to this record of the Battle of Jutland. Its authorship is beyond reproach. One of the authors is an American by birth and training who has been accustomed to marshal evidence for the vast public which exists on both sides of the Atlantic, while the other, a naval officer of the highest attainments, directed the staff which was selected by the Admiralty to sift fact from fiction for the official record which would have cleared away all the mists which shrouded for so long the events of May 31—June 1—if its work had not been stultified.

The Riddle of Jutland has been solved in these enlightening and enheartening pages. It is no longer a riddle. If some reputations have been humbled in the process and others have been exalted, not the authors but the inevitable interpretation of unalterable official records, British and German, must be held responsible. The last word of honest controversy has been written.

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2. THE RUN TO THE SOUTH
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3. HIGH SEA FLEET IN SIGHT
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PART I

WAR

THE RIDDLE OF JUTLAND

CHAPTER I

KIEL

THE self-appointed "Admiral of the Atlantic" stood on the navigation bridge of the royal yacht *Hohenzollern*, surrounded by a group of courtiers, naval and political personalities, all looking ahead at the straight, silver ribbon of water through which the yacht steamed.

Despite the crippled, withered left arm under which the imperial spy-glass was fastened in place, Emperor Wilhelm II, royal Admiralissimo of Germany's navy, was an imposing figure. A man of vast ambition and pride, first of all the Hohenzollerns to whom the naval uniform had conveyed a sense of power, he dominated the naval establishment in fact as well as in name. During his reign the nation had created a fleet, a great fleet, and the Emperor was its supreme commander.

Fourteen swift years of naval competition with Great Britain had seen the fleet grow; in numbers it had become the second strongest in the world—in fighting quality, perhaps the strongest of all. With fascinated interest the Emperor had watched each new ship come down to join it. The fleet had become the symbol of the German nation's strength and genius, of the Hohenzollerns' power—the key to the seven seas and the five continents, a tangible instrument of future world domination.

The naval programme was not yet finished. Plans were laid for a decade to come—with every twelvemonth new ships were being laid down. When the last vessel had finally

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steamed to her place among the squadrons—on that day Germany would dictate to the world, and Wilhelm II, King of Prussia, Emperor of the Germans, Admiral of the German fleet and War-Lord of the German armies, would be the world's most powerful individual.

To-day, the 24th of June, 1914, marked the celebration of a great event in the life of the young navy.

Monumental works, calling on all the nation's resources, had been made necessary that the fleet might exist and grow mightier.

The canal, through which the royal yacht steamed in slow and graceful passage, had been dug 61 miles across the flat Holstein countryside, through the peaceful fields of dairy-farmers, to connect the waters of the North Sea with those of the Baltic—a huge, strategic ditch between the two oceans, linking the two portions of the German sea-coast with a marine highway through which German ships could pass from Kiel to Cuxhaven without entering alien waters.

But in the twenty years since the canal had first been dug, ships had doubled, tripled in size, until the original dimensions of the waterway had been outgrown. The fleet's new dreadnoughts, unable to pass through, had been forced back to the longer route on their journeys between the Baltic and the North Sea—the century-old route through the narrow Danish Belts, the Cattegat and the Skagerrak, easily deniable to Germany in case of war.

For months Germany had been working to overcome this condition. Dredges had scooped up millions of cubic yards of mud and soil from the canal, deepening and widening it; new locks had been built at either end, beautiful constructions of concrete and steel, to pass the fleet in and out with ease and dispatch; at intervals tall bridges had been flung across, to carry the highways and railway lines high above the masts of ships.

To-day marked the completion of the undertaking. The passage of the royal yacht was a proclamation to the world that the Kaiser Wilhelm Ship Canal was once more open to maritime

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traffic. The Emperor, looking upon the achievement of his subjects, found it good.

On the canal banks, groups of country people in holiday clothing waited to stare at the approach of the slender vessel with the black and yellow Imperial standard fluttering from her masthead; men bared their heads respectfully as they saw His Majesty on the bridge, where a technical expert pointed out to him details of the work, eager for the well-earned words of royal approval.

Towards the eastern end of the canal the yacht approached the Holtenauer Locks, and the banks grew more and more crowded. Here the ceremonies would come to their height against the background of the city of Kiel, jewel of the Baltic's naval fortress, seat of the Naval Academy, of mighty dockyard, and quaint old streets.

People began to cheer. The yacht was entering the locks. A white satin ribbon stretched across the entrance—the clean rakish bow came on, delicately, firmly pressed the ribbon taut; the band snapped and fell limp into the water. . . . Dozens of souvenir hunters, in rowing boats, hastened to gather up the dripping plies; the cheering spread and surged inland. His Imperial Highness looked down indulgently upon the good-natured carnival.

As the yacht entered Kiel Harbour, the roadstead became pandemonium. The deep, beautiful fjord was crowded with ships, anchored under the fluttering pennants of full-dress—Germany's naval might, all the squadrons and flotillas of the new fleet, dreadnoughts and sleek cruisers, torpedo-craft and auxiliaries. In honour of the occasion, four British battleships and three British light cruisers had come to join the holiday; the ensigns of the rival fleets flew side by side in friendliness. Ocean liners had brought an international company of visitors to witness the spectacle, and countless yachts and pleasure-craft lay abreast the waterfront, decked with bits of gay bunting.

Under the green trees of the city's residential quarter the quay was black with people, and new cheers rose up. Whistles

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and sirens made a din of welcome. The yacht turned southward, past the man-of-war anchorage in royal review; puffs of smoke shot out from the ships' sides and wafted away in the breeze; the boom of salutes drifted ashore in hard, hot claps of sound, echoing and reverberating among the houses; snatches of music could be heard from the quarter-decks, where the bands played the national anthem in pomp and circumstance . . . seamen, manning the rails, answered the call for "three cheers for His Royal Majesty!"

Centre of the occasion, Wilhelm II looked proudly upon his fleet. Squadron I, anchored together, mustered eight bulky dreadnoughts of the years 1910-11, staunch vessels with 11-inch guns, rugged monsters of steel. Squadron II, equal in numbers, was older—pre-dreadnoughts from the years 1904-08. Squadron III, newest and strongest of all, had five great ships, mounting 12-inch guns. Four more were nearly done, and would soon join the fleet.

But the largest vessels in the anchorage were the battle-cruisers. There were three—*Seydlitz*, *Moltke* and *Von der Tann*, all named after famous generals. Still another, the *Goeben*, was absent on station in the distant Mediterranean. The battle-cruisers had guns heavy as the battleships, but carried lighter armour, and could surge along at 26 knots.

In their light grey paint, as light as the haze, they had a stiff, stolid handsomeness, and the dark slate colour of the visiting British squadron stood out in contrast.

It was inevitable—the comparison of the ships of the two Powers. They were conscious competitors at sea, as they were rivals in every form of commercial, colonial and industrial activity; Britain's fleet had been created to be stronger than Germany's; Germany's fleet had been deliberately created with a view to challenging Britain's supremacy—and the relative merits of the ships, the annual status of the race for sea-power, the probable future of the contest, had been matters of world interest for a decade.

Seldom had squadrons of the two fleets joined company, as

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on the present occasion. Seldom had British ships honoured the German Emperor. The royal yacht, steaming past the visiting dreadnoughts, received the homage due to a sovereign, the gun salutes, the cheers of the crews. The Emperor could see the British admiral upon his quarter-deck, with band and Marine guard drawn up in salute. Wilhelm waved a hand in friendly greeting.

Only one incident occurred to mar the spirit of the occasion. High in the air, the crackle of aeroplane engines drew thousands of eyes. The world was advancing into a marvellous era—man had learned to fly! The majestic shape of a Zeppelin airship floated lazily overhead, with aeroplanes circling about it like gnats to command the attention of the fascinated throng. Thousands of visitors saw these miracles for the first time; from all over Germany they had come to witness the spectacle.

There was a sudden movement of horror. One of the planes plunged downward to destruction, while men held their breaths and women in blouses and ankle-length skirts found themselves faint at the sight. . . .

But the remaining planes swept on, and within a few moments the pageantry had recaptured the public attention. The guns were still saluting out in the fjord; the Emperor's yacht was passing to its anchorage.

All the naval craft, the slender light cruisers, the black destroyers, the mighty capital ships, were sending off boats—their commanders were to report to the Supreme Commander. Gigs under oars put away from the British men-of-war; the waters were alive with movement.

Kiel Week had begun, one of the last and most brilliant spectacles of an age of wealthy nations with fat acres and great factories, and ships carrying rich and peaceful commerce across the seven seas.

Kiel Week, 1914, was a symbol of Germany's culture and civilization, her pride and charm. The cream of Europe's aristocracy was there, drawn by the glamour of the court. The continent's sportsmen were there, come to take part in the yacht

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ances. Visitors were present from all over the world. . . . In the background the High Sea Fleet seemed more a demonstration of German progress—achievement of her splendid and thriving shipyards and capable workers—than a menace which threatened to plunge its creators into war.

The second day of the Emperor's visit culminated in a formal banquet in the royal yacht *Hohenzollern*, whose oak-panelled saloon had seen so much of historical interest, heard so many official secrets.

The Emperor presided; his brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, sat opposite. Both Hohenzollerns wore the mess-dress of the Navy, and the guests, with one or two exceptions, were similarly attired. Forty-four covers had been laid—the company which sat down about the orchid-decorated table was as interesting as the seven seas of 1914 could muster.

The British Ambassador to Germany, Sir Edward Goschen, was at the Emperor's right. Next to him came massive, bearded Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, German Secretary of State for the Navy, creator of the fleet and its dominant sailor personality. For fifteen years he had held office, had influenced Emperor and nation alike, had cajoled, browbeaten and manipulated the Parliament into appropriating the people's money to build ships; his had been the vision which had foreseen Germany, a country of the soil, as a great naval power; his had been the energy which had made the dream reality. A powerful man, uncompromising in his sense of realities.

Admiral von Müller, President of the Cabinet, preferred diplomatic methods to those of gunfire and dreadnoughts. Von Müller was a naval officer turned courtier, a polished, aristocratic man, prouder of a suave turn of phrase than of *Realpolitik*, clever in his ability to play upon the Emperor's vanity—a subtle member of the anti-Tirpitz cabal.

Admiral von Pohl, Chief of the Naval Staff, sitting one place removed from von Tirpitz, was the active head of German naval operations—a leader conscious of his subordination to the Emperor rather than of his own authority as military pinnacle

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of the Imperial navy—more eager to carry out the Emperor's wishes than to initiate policies and actions of his own. It was his concern to see that the fleet pleased its royal commander, not to use the Emperor, as Tirpitz did, as a tool to manipulate the fleet.

The High Sea Fleet's Commander-in-Chief, Admiral von Ingenohl, was another officer dominated by the Emperor's personality. Duty, obedience, reverence toward the throne—these were the Commander-in-Chief's very being. His nature shrank from individual initiative; he was a good sailor and drill-master, who would faithfully do what was expected of him—not an iota more and not an iota less.

Of all the ranking German naval officers at the table there was only one, besides von Tirpitz, who truly had the genius of command. He sat far down the table at the Emperor's left—Vice-Admiral Scheer, 51 years old, a short man, aggressive and energetic, still a minor figure in the fleet. He commanded the Second Squadron, the old pre-dreadnought battleships, and was the idol of those who served under him. In the atmosphere of 1914 the prediction that he would one day succeed the Emperor as the navy's supreme commander was too fantastic to contemplate.

It was a pleasant, congenial banquet. The table was alive with the talk of men, with laughter and anecdote; here were statesmen and mariners who knew the world and its waters. The British officers sat at each alternate place. Vice-Admiral Sir George Warrender, commanding the visiting squadron, was at the Emperor's left. Commodore Goodenough, leader of the British light cruisers, was between Admiral von Tirpitz and Admiral von Pohl. The captains of the British ships, the officers of the British Staff, exchanged reminiscences with their German neighbours, while at either end of the table the young aides, their shoulders glittering with the aiguillettes of office, felt themselves fortunate to be in such a gathering.

The presence of the naval vessels, the statesmen, and the Emperor lent peculiar effect, in Kiel, to the events of Sunday, June 28, 1914.

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A thousand miles south in the Balkans the townspeople of Serajevo had gathered in the streets to witness the visit of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne. The archduke's automobile had just left the City Hall when pistol shots sounded from the crowd. It was the second attempt of the day upon Franz Ferdinand's life, and the bullets struck down both the royal personage and his consort, Sophie, Duchess of Hohenburg. The echo of the pistol shots was to reverberate into the life of every individual upon the surface of the earth, and into the lives of unborn generations to come.

News of the assassinations reached Kiel shortly after noon. To the man in the street it was shocking; to the man behind the political curtain it brought consternation. Its potentialities were more than serious. Clash of Slav and Austro-German territorial ambitions in the Balkans was the menace—and with it came the possibility that all the complicated system of European political, financial and military alliances would be set into motion, with results that spread until the entire continent was involved. Would Austria use the incident as a pretext to declare war on tiny Serbia? What would Russia's position be? Germany's? The French?

At once the German court went into official mourning for the murdered Habsburg; the Emperor's participation in Kiel's festivities came to an abrupt end. All public entertainments were cancelled. Aboard every ship of the fleet the national ensign was lowered to half-staff; wisps of black crape appeared on the side-arms of the naval officers.

There was something foreboding about the heavy laden atmosphere, like the gathering of thunder-clouds upon a fair and sunny afternoon.

Next morning, Monday, the Emperor left for Vienna, to join the Austrian court. At the appointed hour all the senior officers of the ships, both German and British, went ashore to attend his departure. The Empress, who had not been present at Kiel during the week, arrived by motor-car, wearing deep mourning, her face bearing the evidences of weeping. Before

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leaving for the railway station the Emperor spoke to the British officers, and at greater length to the British Ambassador, and said a few words to the leaders of his fleet. Then the entire party went by motor to the Kiel terminus, where the royal train steamed out in heavy silence, in complete contrast to Wilhelm's reception five days earlier.

The British squadron was to remain at Kiel until the next day, June 30, and for twenty-four hours German and British ships remained at anchor side by side in the harbour.

One thought and only one surged up in their minds—the possibility of war.

As, however, the visiting squadron steamed to sea next morning the farewell was one of all friendliness. For more than a century Germans and Britons had been side by side on many warring occasions. They had fought together against Napoleon, had given mutual blood in China; they had had disputes, tense moments—but they had never struck at each other with the implements of war.

Now, as the seven departing vessels disappeared into the Baltic, the British commander sent back a final wireless message in the name of his squadron:

“Friends in the past; friends for ever.”

CHAPTER II

SPITHEAD

JULY the Fifteenth witnessed the assembly of Britain's three fleets at Spithead, in an atmosphere more sober than the recent German festivities at Kiel. The international situation was causing increased anxiety.

By another of the curious, fateful coincidences of this fateful year, the occasion was a test mobilization of all Britain's naval strength, ordered by Parliament months before, when there was no hint of trouble on the European scene, carried out now in the shadow of war.

Every vessel on the Royal Navy's list had been ordered into commission for the manœuvres. British naval reservists by the thousand were leaving their places of employment and their homes, putting on the blue uniform of the sea, and reporting for duty.

Even when carried out as a test in times of peace, the movements of war are sombre—still, the Island Kingdom was mercifully unconscious that many of these men would never return home again, and that the navy, once mobilized, would remain upon a war footing for long, cataclysmic years.

At Spithead, between the Isle of Wight and the harbour of Portsmouth, 182 ships of war came together to form the mightiest maritime force which Britain had ever assembled in her long history. As the ships were assigned to their anchorages, the island stood up green and fair against the water; opposite, the cranes and building-ways of Portsmouth dockyard were symbols of the twentieth century.

The growth of Germany's sea-power had led Britain to concentrate her ships, little by little, in home waters. There were

SPITHEAD

still many vessels abroad—in the Mediterranean, in the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans and in the China Sea—but the cream of the Royal Navy lay, to-day, at Spithead.

It was the greatest navy in the world, the oldest, the largest, with the proudest traditions. For centuries its deeds and strength had made Britain mistress of the seas; every effort to displace her had crashed upon the fleets which she had built. Here, gleaming in modernity, was the latest of her maritime fighting creations, built in answer to the new German fleet, to overawe it and render it futile. The vessels were new, but their names had been carried before them by square-rigged ships of the line and frigates, historic, unforgotten oaken hulls of yesterday, which had never known a conqueror.

Five days were spent in assembling and organizing the ships, fitting the reservists into their billets, adjusting the gigantic mechanism of men and human minds to the intricate mechanism of steel squadrons and flotillas. On the fifth day the navy was on a war basis—three fully-manned fleets, one for the line of battle, one as a reserve, and the third for defence of the coasts. The First Fleet alone numbered more ships than Germany's entire navy.

On the 20th of July the King arrived, and the ships prepared to take to sea.

George V, Sovereign of the United Kingdom and Emperor of India, was a monarch whose temperament and background contrasted with those of his first cousin, the German Emperor. Dignified, reserved, and unpretentious, he ruled over an Empire incomparably the greater of the two, and led a greater navy, though his constitutional powers were more restricted, since time had matured Britain and she was in truth a democracy, whereas Germany's Parliament exercised only limited and fictitious control over the Hohenzollern.

The British King's relation to the Royal Navy was intimate and personal. Its hereditary leader, he had been educated for the sea, and as a young man had served as a naval officer. On ascending the throne he had become the fleet's ranking admiral,

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its head—but unlike his German cousin, he had no active part in its military command. Fleet leadership was vested in the Parliamentary and Naval Lords of the Admiralty, and in the admirals who led the floating forces—responsible to the monarch and to the nation.

To review the fleet to-day the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert* lay at Spithead, and from her deck George V watched the spectacular pageant of the Royal Navy putting out to sea.

For four hours the armada steamed past. During all that time there was an unbroken column of ships in motion—British ships of every naval type and description, flying the white ensign of the Royal Navy.

The battle-cruisers, under Rear-Admiral Sir David Beatty in the flagship *Lion*, were at the head of the line—attacking weapons, descendants of the frigate. Britain, whose long naval history breathed the spirit of the attack, had sent the first battle-cruiser, the *Invincible*, down to sea in 1908, to revolutionize the cruiser forces of the world. Since that time other nations had built battle-cruisers, and eight more of them had been added to Britain's fleet—the newest, *Queen Mary*, *Tiger* and *Princess Royal*, were the fleet's largest fighting craft, 720 feet long.

Now came great battle-squadrons of dreadnoughts, proud with an ineffable majesty of dark-grey bulks and masses, all mighty men-of-war which had followed the *Dreadnought* battleship of 1906 to sea—she who had given her name to a new type of ships of the line and set all the navies of the world agog, a colossal surprise produced by Britain's dockyards in twelve short months of fevered activity. The dreadnought-battleship, like the battle-cruiser, had been distinguished by heavy guns in turrets—eight and ten large cannon—whereas the older ships had not had more than four.

After the long line of dreadnoughts came the older battleships, sturdy veterans, with years of duty at Malta and Gibraltar to their credit. And then the cruisers and destroyers, the slender ships whose very lines breathed speed. Torpedo craft and torpedo-defence craft, scouting craft and attacking craft.

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The navy represented such an investment of the national wealth as Britain had never made at sea before. The cost of a battleship had risen from £1,000,000 to £2,000,000, and then to £3,000,000, and every year, with the growing intricacy of their equipment and the hugeness of their engines and their hulls, they were dearer.

Costly to build and costly to keep at sea—each capital ship needed a crew of a thousand men, with skilled technicians among the ratings. At full speed a single dreadnought swallowed up five hundred tons of coal a day; the labour of thousands of miners had been necessary to provide the fuel for these manœuvres.

They went out majestically. It was a demonstration of seafaring splendour and resolution such as no other nation in all the world's history had been able to produce, a magnificent answer to the German fleet—a response which set a pace that no one else could follow.

At the very end of the huge armada steamed the gunboat *Speedwell*, as though to furnish a measuring-stick by which His Majesty could compute what miracles the nation had done in this quarter of a century. *Speedwell* was only twenty-five years old; she had been a fine gunboat in her day, and the men who built her in 1889 had felt her a worthy addition to any navy. To-day she was puny, her 735 tons so insignificant beside the mammoth 26,400 tons of the *Iron Duke*, the 30,000 tons of the *Queen Mary*, that she was reduced to humble tasks—useful for sweeping up the explosive mines which an enemy might deposit in the sea-waterways in the event of war.

First, Second and Third Fleets—they disappeared over the horizon, taking with them thousands of Britain's sons towards the manœuvres which were to occupy them for four days. Spithead was empty and deserted. And the sovereign left his yacht, to return to London and the duties of State. The Empire was in troubled times—civil war threatened in Ireland; Britain's women were militantly agitating for political rights . . . the Foreign Office was consulting anxiously with the ambassadors

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and the continental Governments, making desperate efforts to allay the increasing tension of the Balkan situation and the international scene.

But England looked green and peaceful as the King journeyed back towards London. It was difficult to imagine that the problems of the day could not, with reason and patience, be solved.

CHAPTER III

JELlicoe

ON Saturday, August 1, troops were marching upon the European continent.

In England, it was the beginning of the summer Bank Holiday. Until Tuesday morning the business of the nation was stilled; offices, shops, factories, Government bureaux, the Stock Exchange and the banks—all would be closed.

The railway stations were filled with crowds as London departed for the country and the seaside. Under the great vault of Euston Station, where trains left for the North and Scotland, the platforms were a crush of citizens. An express train for Edinburgh and the Highlands was waiting, its engine breathing steam, its carriages rapidly filling as porters flung luggage into the racks of the compartments. Portly Britons stepped aboard, putting aside the thought of the world's difficulties to dwell upon the grouse that would fall to their guns; the shooting season was approaching. Scotland's air lay ahead, pleasant after London's humidity. Matrons came down the platform, speaking to their children in pleasant voices.

Into the throng came a man about to take a journey pregnant with destiny. No one gave him a second glance; his face and personality were unknown to the nation, and in his quiet civilian clothing he was not a figure to attract particular notice. He took a place in a first-class carriage, reserved in the name of an obscure clerk at the Admiralty, a name less likely to stir attention than his own.

Vice-Admiral Sir John Jellicoe was a small man, almost light in stature, with direct eyes, a dominant nose, and a firmly-closed mouth. A man of decision, of balanced conservatism,

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with a mind as clear and precise as that of a constructing engineer, used to considering and weighing all sides of a question, totally unaffected by outside opinion, caring little for appearances and less for the spectacular.

There was nothing in his dress or manner to indicate that he was already an international personality—that he had been one of the principal guests at the wedding of Princess Victoria Louise of Hohenzollern at the German court last year, entertained by Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, invited to dine with the German Emperor. He was a distinguished sailor, decorated for courage under fire and for the rescue of life at sea. Forty of his fifty-four years had been spent in the Royal Navy. Professionally, he was a specialist in naval gunnery, in the handling of great guns, and in fleet strategy and tactics. His unusual gifts as an organizer had made him Director of Naval Ordnance under that turbulent First Sea Lord, "Radical Jack" Fisher, Baron of Kilverstone, builder of the present fleet and an intractable taskmaster.

Fisher had seen in Jellicoe the "coming man"—and Jellicoe, as Director of Naval Ordnance, had improved the shooting of the fleet by more than thirty-three per cent. That was a secret. Most of the details of the admiral's recent career lay buried in the realm of secrets—the more remarkable features were all hidden there. Latterly he had been Second Sea Lord at the Admiralty. Now he was going to sea.

Before the train started a messenger hurried down the platform, found the admiral's compartment, and handed him a sealed envelope, to be opened only when he received instructions from the Admiralty to do so. The envelope contained another secret, so closely guarded that it was withheld, for the time being, even from the admiral himself.

This was the climax of a naval career.

For Jellicoe had been marked for the command of the fleet these last three years, groomed to lead it in the event of war with Germany. Fisher, considering him Britain's modern Nelson, had communicated his enthusiasm to Winston Churchill, the present First Lord. Jellicoe had understood the significance

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of his promotion in December, 1911, to command the Second Division of the Home Fleet over the heads of eleven senior vice-admirals—it had put him in direct line of succession to the high command.

And now, on the eve of almost certain war, he suspected, from a remark let fall by the First Lord the day before, that he might be ordered to take command of the First Fleet, the battle fleet, reorganized and re-named the Grand Fleet. The leadership of this greatest maritime fighting force in Britain's history was given into his hands—honour, distinction beyond words, recognition of all his faithfulness and brilliance—the post coveted by every British naval officer. And with it came responsibility and burden such as few men had borne—the responsibility for defending the British Isles against attack and invasion—the responsibility for the security of all England—for the Empire's to-morrow.

Despite his pride at being called on to accept this mission, Jellicoe was profoundly troubled.

All his precise and meticulous temperament protested against this ninety-ninth hour change in the fleet command. He felt it unfair to Admiral Sir George Callaghan, the man who was being superseded—kindly, beloved old gentleman—who, as Commander-in-Chief, had made the fleet what it was. Unfair to the fleet to ask it to transfer its loyalties on the eve of conflict. Unfair to the nation. Unfair, even, to himself.

When Jellicoe thought of the possibility that he would have to take the ships into a major action against the German High Sea Fleet within the weeks, perhaps within the days, that lay immediately ahead—ships and men to whom he and his ways were unfamiliar—he felt the change was dangerous. To be successful a fleet must be one with its commander. There was peril “in substituting, at such a juncture and at such short notice, an admiral who was not in touch with the fleet, for a Commander-in-Chief with long experience of the Command.”

He decided that he must state his convictions.

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Three times he telegraphed to the Admiralty, asking for the matter to be reconsidered and offering to serve as Chief of the Staff to Sir George Callaghan.

Three times his request was denied. Churchill, the First Lord, had made up his mind and was not to be influenced. The plans for war had put Jellicoe in this post, and would not be altered. Sir George Callaghan's appointment had already run a year beyond its normal time. Sir George had been an excellent Commander-in-Chief, but he was not a war leader, not a Nelson. And the Admiralty was sure that in Jellicoe the "modern Nelson" had been found.

The train crossed the Scottish border and went on through Perth to Inverness, into the bleak, wild country along the east Scottish coast. Across the moors there were occasional glimpses of the sea.

Twenty-four hours after leaving London the admiral reached Thurso, a small town at the end of the railway line, its grey stone houses and peaceful crooked streets a vision of isolated life.

The harbour looked out into the Pentland Firth, narrow, turbulent tide-swept waters separating Scotland from the Orkney Islands. In the harbour the light cruiser *Boadicea* was waiting to take the new Commander-in-Chief across to Scapa Flow, where the Grand Fleet had anchored and where he was to join it.

It was a fair midsummer afternoon. The small grey vessel, with the admiral on board, stood out into the firth, surging forward with restless power; Dunnet Head, known to the mariners of many nations, stood up on the right hand, to starboard. On the left, to port, the Orkneys lifted their low rounding shapes out of the sea, like barren remnants of the deluge. Sparsely inhabited, seldom visited, with crofters almost as shy and wild as the scraggy Orkney sheep, the islands were a forgotten part of the world. Sea-birds nested in the sheer cliffs that rose up above the beating surf to westward. The cruiser cut through the eddying tide-rips, hurrying across. In between the islands Hoy and South Ronaldsay a deep channel

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ran by Flotta Island, which stood across its centre, dividing it into two sounds.

Through Hoxa Sound the admiral came into Scapa Flow, and there, in endless array, found the Grand Fleet. Four days earlier the ships had vanished from their bases in the English Channel. No man outside the navy and the Government knew where they had gone—only the lonely islanders had seen their arrival. No man in Germany, no man in the German Intelligence Service, knew where they were. Twenty great dreadnought-battleships, nine pre-dreadnoughts, many cruisers and destroyers, the battle-cruiser squadrons under Rear-Admiral Beatty, the 1st Light Cruiser Squadron under Commodore Goodenough.

On the afternoon of August 2, 1914, Jellicoe joined the Grand Fleet and went aboard the *Iron Duke* battleship, which was to be his flagship.

Iron Duke had ten 13·5-inch guns, in five massive turrets. Her single stout tripod mast, forward of her two funnels, supported the large bridges from which the admiral's staff would guide the fleet's courses; forward of the bridges there was a heavy enclosed conning-tower which would be the admiral's battle-station. The ship's sides were protected with great armour-plates of steel, twelve inches thick; she was splendidly handsome, six hundred and twenty feet long, divided within into dozens of water-tight compartments. Her thousand-man crew would fight at battle-stations in turrets and magazines, engine and boiler rooms, each man performing a single small task which made the ship a living thing, as though she had one mind, her commander's, his powers extending to all the cruising and striking power of this huge weapon.

The boatswain's mate piped the side; the side-boys at the gangway were at the salute; the quarter-deck stood to rigid attention—the admiral came aboard.

A striking moment in a man's career. Sir George Callaghan's flag came down; that of Sir John Jellicoe was hoisted. With the publication of the orders the change in command was complete.

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Yesterday, the day on which Jellicoe had left London, Germany had declared war upon Russia. To-morrow, August 3, Germany was to declare war on France and begin the invasion of Belgium. The next day, August 4, as the day passed on to August 5 at midnight, Britain was to be drawn in.

On the morning of August 4, Jellicoe took the Grand Fleet into the North Sea, and was cruising there when the news of the opening of hostilities reached him by wireless.

As the word was passed through the ships, a surge of determination went through the thousands of men who stood waiting at their stations. They all believed the Germans would appear at once to contest for the mastery of this sea.

The world, shocked by the events of these catastrophic days, waited likewise in suspense for news of a great battle between the two fleets—waited to see whether Germany's naval striking power would prove as great as that of the armies which were invading Belgium and France.

With the declaration of war the British Navy had immediately taken aggressive action. A line of British cruisers had appeared to the north of the Orkney and Shetland Islands, to prevent German commerce from entering or leaving the North Sea through those waters.

To the south of the British Isles, other cruisers had closed the English Channel.

Germany was blockaded.

CHAPTER IV

THE NORTH SEA

THE chart of the North Sea was the new chess-board of war, roughly a rectangle, taller than it was broad.

There, across the upper part, was the track of the Grand Fleet leading into it.

Diagonally opposite British Scapa Flow lay the enemy's Wilhelmshaven, full breadth of the board distant, 475 miles—base of the opposing chess-player.

Jellicoe had two boundaries to defend.

One boundary was the coast of Britain, frailly fortified—mile upon mile without a single gun. Defence vessels lay in the harbours, but they belonged to the old Third Fleet.

At the top, flexible, but nevertheless a boundary, was the line of blockading ships which had been stationed beyond the Shetland Islands to intercept German trade. And this second boundary was as weak as the coasts, for the blockading vessels were unfit to defend themselves against modern men-of-war.

Jellicoe, the defender, must play the game with the strong ships of the fleet, manœuvring them about the board and using them to defend his boundaries.

The enemy, too, had pieces to play and boundaries to defend. Jellicoe could shake his head, contemplating those short bits of German coast in the lower right-hand corner. Only a fool would attack the compact, tremendously fortified German coast.

No, the war was not to be won there.

The greatest lever Britain could apply was not naval assault, but the invisible pressure of time, operating through the blockade.

Every day the blockade remained unbroken Germany lost a dozen fortunes in interrupted commerce, emptied her larders

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by a little more. Germany was neither self-supporting in food, nor in the raw materials of industry. Her sixty-five million people lived upon a soil inadequate to their needs, nor could her Central European allies make good her deficiencies.

Surely the enemy was aware of the danger of his position. Surely the German admiral would strike, to pierce and scatter the blockade line, rout its defenders—to restore life to Germany's blocked arteries of trade. No nation so intelligent as Germany could have ventured upon a war without preparing for this exigency.

Or was there truth in the pre-war rumours—that Germany would neglect the blockade to strike at Britain's coast, and land armies of invading troops to march on London?

In any case, the next move was in Germany's hands. The enemy pieces must come out upon the board, and it would be Jellicoe's task to meet them. Coast or blockade-line, whichever was the German objective, there would be a naval battle. The great game would begin, with Britain's safety as prize, Germany the aggressor and the Grand Fleet the defender—and the admiral who emerged with the greater number of pieces would be the immortal victor.

Jellicoe pondered over his fleet.

He did not underestimate his ships, yet the thought of battle gave rise to anxieties.

Would the Grand Fleet prove the equal, in war's harsh test, of the tremendously efficient, highly-trained German Navy?

The enemy had fewer pieces, but the enemy's pieces were very strong.

Jellicoe's success or failure would depend upon three factors.

First—the hulls, armour and construction of his ships—the defensive qualities built into the fleet in the shipyards. These were not to be changed except with tremendous difficulty; he must take them as they were, having faith that Britain's designers and builders were the equal of the enemy's.

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Second—his guns and gunnery, his offensive power. So far as the guns went, they had been tried and proven, and the admiral had full confidence in them. One side or the other might manifest a slight advantage in projectile design—that alone could hardly be decisive. As to gunnery, however—the human factor—there was reason for deep consideration. Was the Royal Navy's standard high enough for war? As high as the Germans'? Jellicoe knew that his fleet could shoot—knew the abilities of each ship, how many hits she could score out of a hundred shots at target-practice. Yet the target-practice of peace days was different from the gunnery of battle's heat and confusion. Could the ships strike an enemy steaming at full speed, twisting and turning at the outermost limits of the guns' range? Was there room for improvement? The admiral could not rest until he felt sure his ships could hit whatever target battle presented them.

And third—his tactics. To-day he had twenty-nine battle-ships moving through the sea in ponderous beauty—a force so large that it was cumbersome, so newly assembled that it lacked cohesion. He could make no quick feints, no rapier thrusts—his battle-line was a bludgeon, slow to move, difficult to wield. Twenty-nine capital ships in a column eight miles long—to pass a flag signal to them all took at best several minutes, at worst half an hour. To change the direction of the front at twenty knots he needed twenty-five minutes. To deploy from a cruising into a battle formation required from fifteen minutes to half an hour. At such tactical moments he was vulnerable, and if the smaller, more compact enemy should take him off guard, the results might be critical. Each ship must play her part perfectly, or the whole battle-line would be thrown into confusion. Was there room for tactical improvement?

Time—for development and improvement—was vital to Jellicoe. He had dozens of questions to consider. Scapa Flow, the base, was undefended, hundreds of miles from a dockyard, without a gun or a fortification. Food must be brought there

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for forty thousand men, coal for a hundred ships; the slender line of communications must be guarded.

The Royal Navy had been plunged into war—a huge, peace-bound organization, impressive to look at but heavy with inertia, slow to gather momentum, prone to the over-confidence inherent in such a navy's size and prestige. Britain's preparations, made in time of peace, did not satisfy the new Commander-in-Chief, nor enable him to meet the demands of the hour with the knowledge that everything humanly possible to ensure victory had been accomplished.

Britain had built a fleet, but there was a war to be fought, and Jellicoe had a great task before him, the greatest of his lifetime—it would be one that took place behind the scenes, invisible, unsung and unspectacular.

Yet, with all his anxieties, the admiral had chosen a bold course. He, who loved certainty, could gamble as boldly as any plunger. His first move had been to take the fleet down towards enemy waters, and if a German ship came over the horizon, he would strike at once, and strike hard, with all his might.

CHAPTER V

WILHELMSHAVEN

GERMAN Wilhelmshaven was the most gigantic dock-yard of the continent, a Colossus of cranes and workshops, basins, ammunition storehouses; the roar of its activities, the clatter of its rivet-hammers, drifted across the countryside day and night; smoke rose from the tall chimneys and blew away over the town outside the dockyard gates, a town dedicated to the High Sea Fleet.

Ship by ship the High Sea Fleet, Germany's battle-fleet, had come in, passing through the locks into the tidal basins, tying up alongside the concrete quays; the dockyard's enormous machinery received them, pouring fuel, munitions and supplies into them. Within a few hours they would be ready to take the sea.

A thousand rumours were in the air. The fleet was to go out to battle. The enemy was reported off the coast. Each ship was alive, each man of each crew busy at his duties. Gunnery lieutenants tested and inspected the mechanism of the turrets; commanding officers were in conference with the admiral. Battle-readiness, goal of the navy in all its peace-time training, had become reality.

The crews were in good spirit—last year's class of recruits had had nearly a year's experience, until they fitted into the smooth-working unity of the ships with admirable polish. The July manoeuvres and target-practices, climax of the year's work, had been like dress rehearsals of the battle which lay ahead.

Wilhelmshaven was only a hundred miles from Kiel, but the two towns were very different in atmosphere and scene. Wilhelmshaven was Germany's naval city of war, stark and severe,

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without social graces, dominated by the machine. Wilhelmshaven had sprung into being because of the fleet, built on the site of a fishing village, to become Germany's North Sea naval harbour.

Between the dockyard and the sea ran the River Jade, past flat banks so low that dikes had been built to keep the salt tides from invading the land. Here and there, on the dikes, there were the emplacements of coast-defence guns, and inland one could see the slowly turning arms of windmills.

Ten miles out the waters broadened to form Schillig Road, the fleet anchorage. Here, as the ships emerged from the dockyard's tidal basins, they would anchor in rendezvous before going on to sea. The river banks were wide, almost invisible; lighthouses marked the channels which had been dredged for the dreadnoughts. The Jade was difficult to navigate, with shifting sands and flats.

Another hour's steaming, and the fleet would come into the North Sea, to the muddy green swells, the dash of salt spray, of the "wet triangle." This bit of shallow water, called Heligoland Bight on the charts, was the only part of the North Sea Germany could call her own. Three great rivers poured into it, each leading from an inland harbour—the Jade from Wilhelmshaven, the Weser from Bremen, the Elbe from mighty Hamburg.

The alarm of danger would bring the fleet pouring out of the rivers to form for battle—dreadnoughts from the Jade, cruisers from the Weser, destroyers from the Elbe. Through the Elbe, and the Kaiser Wilhelm Ship Canal, the ships could be transferred to Kiel and the Baltic when necessary.

Off-shore there was a natural outpost, rising red-cliffed out of the sea—Heligoland, the island fortress, impregnable with turreted guns and concrete emplacements. Under the cliffs the surf beat against the breakwater of an artificial harbour—an off-shore submarine base for coast defence.

A flotilla of torpedo-boat destroyers had been sent out beyond the island at the declaration of war to do sentry duty.

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Expecting a close blockade, the fleet could not understand the failure of British ships to appear off the coast.

While the High Sea Fleet made ready for battle, the Emperor had gone to Coblenz, on the Rhine, to Army General Staff Head-quarters, where Germany's military destinies were being determined. The Chancellor and the Cabinet had accompanied the monarch to lend advice on political and diplomatic questions. The Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral von Pohl, had followed the navy's royal commander.

Coblenz was dominated by the army, the towering personalities of the General Staff who directed the movement of the troops. Head-quarters was concentrated upon one thought—the invasion of Belgium and the crushing of France. The sea was hundreds of kilometres distant; the game being played here was the conflict of continental nations, a struggle of the soil, of trenches and marching men, with little thought for salt water or sea-power.

The news from the front was good. Operations were proceeding according to plan—the march through Belgium was becoming that great sweeping movement which would progress across France and was intended to rout the French army and swallow up Paris. Tiny coloured pins moved forward across the great map—each telegraphic dispatch from the front shifted one or two forward. Generals entered the room, stood bent over the table, straightened up with satisfied mien.

As for Britain, she was no antagonist! A country's strength was measured by the number of men she could put into the field. Britain had only a small standing army—how could she enter a modern war without armies which embraced her entire manpower? She lay there behind her fleet, relying on a weapon which every good soldier scorned—a blockade, miserable skulking way of fighting! Germany would wait, before dealing with England, until France and Russia had been crushed. Then a diplomatic peace could be arranged, for England would have no desire to go on with the struggle alone after the defeat of her continental allies. England might keep her Empire—for the

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time being there was no very good way of taking it from her. But Germany would dominate the Continent and take the French and Belgian colonies—these were the natural spheres of expansion. Later on, perhaps fifty years hence, Germany, the rising nation, would absorb the British Empire too, and aged England would be glad of it. For the present the two monarchies were meant to share the world.

As for the German High Sea Fleet—from the army's point of view there was only one reason for its existence. It must protect the German coasts from invasion and guarantee the safety of the armies' seaward flanks.

Attack the British at sea? Folly! It would be a short war. The British fleet was the one antagonist whose strength, on paper, was superior to that of Germany. There would be time enough to deal with Britain's navy in the next war, when German sea-power had grown strong enough to down any opposition. Then naval battle could be conducted with the certainty of victory, rather than the risk of upsetting the whole national strategy of a 1914.

The land warfare would be over by the spring. The enemy blockade would have no effect upon the outcome. The fleet could rely upon the army to win.

This military point of view fitted admirably into the naval desires and opinions of Germany's statesmen.

Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg was anxious to avoid naval hostilities with Great Britain. The suggestion from professional naval circles that the fleet had excellent prospects of success, merely strengthened the Chancellor's conviction that a naval action should not take place. He felt that the one chance for future friendly relations with Great Britain lay in preventing the undying animosities and rivalries which would be stirred if the blood of British sailors were shed. Unconscious of the islanders' reaction to the invasion of Belgium, he was obtusely blind to the workings of Anglo-Saxon psychology and believed Britain was at heart friendly to Germany. He hoped to go to an early Peace Conference saying: "We have drawn the sword

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against each other in name only—our fleets have been content to be passive antagonists—let us be friends once more, confess our mutual admiration, and admit that neither of us ever wanted to damage the other.” In this the Chancellor shared the universal conviction that the war would be a short one.

Admiral von Müller, influential Chief of the Cabinet, supported von Bethmann Hollweg, feeling the British navy to be so superior that there was no success to be got from attacking it.

Of the prominent figures in the Emperor's entourage, only one opposed the views of the soldiers and diplomats and urged an aggressive fleet policy. Grand Admiral von Tirpitz could see no other antagonist than Britain, could think in no other terms but those of sea-power. It would be Britain that proved Germany's stumbling-block in the long run. He breathed animosity towards the island people who had allied themselves with Frenchmen and Slavs. Tirpitz had been the fleet's constructor—he would gladly sacrifice its last ship if he could only carry Britain's navy down as well, and end Great Britain's sovereignty at sea.

In the dispute, von Pohl, Chief of the Naval Staff, was content to play a passive rôle and carry out the Emperor's wishes.

And the Emperor? Wilhelm II, ready to listen to his generals, to the Chancellor, and the polished von Müller, let von Tirpitz feel the chill isolation of royal displeasure. The fleet was a weapon so new, so promising, so flattering, that the Emperor could not bear the thought of losing it. The dreadnought battle-line must be kept intact—until it could be finished, fleet of his dreams, mightiest of the world.

Yet there was no need to restrict operations so entirely as Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg wished. Germany might reasonably refrain from putting the heavy ships of the line into the play, but there was no reason to overlook the opportunity to destroy enemy dreadnoughts.

The goal, peace or war, was a German navy stronger than

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Britain's? Let Germany send out her submarines, her torpedo-craft and mine-layers, to lie in wait for the enemy at sea, and trap him into ambush. No other nation had developed the torpedo as had Germany. Let Britain feel this underwater weapon; let Britain's fleet suffer before an invisible attack. Later, when a number of enemy battleships had been sunk, the High Sea Fleet might be permitted to steam out and deliver the *coup de grâce*.

These were the influences which shaped the wording of the Imperial Order to the navy.

The dreadnoughts were to be kept in harbour; they were forbidden to fight except under completely favourable circumstances—such as the encounter of a small, detached British unit close to the German coast.

The mine-laying forces and submarine torpedo-craft were to take up immediate and aggressive guerrilla warfare.

Von Tirpitz, stung by the nature of the orders, succeeded in persuading the Emperor to add a third clause, specifying that if favourable circumstances were encountered, the fleet not only "might," but "*must*" fight. Von Tirpitz hoped this would encourage von Ingenohl, the Commander-in-Chief, to interpret the instructions liberally and adopt an active policy.

But von Ingenohl assumed the strictly defensive fleet strategy which he interpreted the orders as requiring. The Commander-in-Chief was not a man to exceed limitations, and he was further influenced by private warnings that the Emperor's displeasure would fall heavily upon the head of any officer who lost one of the High Sea Fleet's capital ships.

It was permissible to damage the enemy, but the enemy must not be allowed to damage Germany.

To the intense disappointment of officers and crews, the fleet, ready for battle, was kept inside the locks at Wilhelmshaven, unassailable by storms or the attacks that might beat down from the sea outside, withdrawn from the war—it would take hours to raise steam and get the ships to sea.

In the Mediterranean, the battle-cruiser *Goeben* and the

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light cruiser *Breslau*, the only German naval vessels in that sea, had fired the first shots of the naval hostilities, bombarding the French-Algerian towns of Philippeville and Bona on August 4. Pursued by strong British and French forces, they were flying east, seeking the shelter of Austrian or Turkish waters.

In the Pacific, Count von Spee's crack German Asiatic Squadron had disappeared from its base and was striking for home, daring a cruise half-way round the world in the face of Britain's strategically located overseas naval units. Other isolated German cruisers, which had been on duty in Germany's colonial harbours, were raiding commerce and throwing alarm into mariners in the Indian and South Pacific Oceans.

All these ships, acting with bold aggressiveness against great odds, were achieving pronounced military successes—it would take more than Britain's prestige to stop them—Britain would have to hit equally hard, and shoot with equal deadliness.

Yet Britain's commerce continued, while Germany's had vanished—the red-white-black merchant flag had disappeared from the seas overnight as German cargo-carriers and passenger ships sought neutral harbours to escape British sea-power. Only the defeat of the Royal Navy could release these ships to continue their voyaging.

On the European continent tragic events were taking place to the tramp of marching men, the roar of heavy artillery, the trot of cavalry. The German advance was swallowing up Liège and rolling onward, an irresistible, ponderous military machine. Before this advance everything was confusion. The roads were choked with refugees. The Belgian army was in rout. Frenchmen, in uniforms of red and blue, gave ground with futile stubbornness. The small British Expeditionary Force, transported across the Channel under the escort of the Channel Fleet, with Jellicoe making a covering movement into the North Sea, was flung into the breach without effect—the tide of German troops came on.

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At German Head-quarters the General Staff was so contemptuous of Britain's reinforcements that the German navy was refused permission to attack the moderately guarded troop transports. Let Britain's soldiers come. It would be simpler to deal with them after they had reached the continent than to risk contact with the enemy fleet.

The war would be over within a few weeks.

CHAPTER VI

BEATTY

IF Sir John Jellicoe had been the Admiralty's choice as Britain's modern Nelson, another British naval officer rose to capture the public imagination before the war was a month old—a colourful man, born, whether he wished it or no, to become Jellicoe's rival and the British masses' idol.

Sir David Beatty, promoted on August 3 to be an acting vice-admiral, was commander of the newly-organized Battle-Cruiser Fleet—the Grand Fleet's fast striking wing. The command carried with it great independence of action. The swift, dreadnought battle-cruisers, with their accompanying light cruisers and destroyers, were Beatty's to train and his to lead. Carrying out Jellicoe's broad strategy, they would frequently steam separately from the Grand Fleet main body, sometimes hundreds of miles distant, and their commander, while under the supreme authority of the Commander-in-Chief, must exercise personal judgment, leadership and initiative. The fate of the fleet might depend upon Sir David Beatty's actions.

In many ways Beatty seemed ideally fitted for the appointment. If Jellicoe was the born strategist and organizer, Beatty was the born fighting man, unconventional with his non-regulation uniform, six brass buttons instead of the prescribed eight, his cap carried rakishly over jutting, combative features with keen, aggressive eyes. His extraordinary career had been as striking as it had been turbulent. He was only forty-three, a forceful personality who had made admirers as devoted as his enemies were bitter.

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A contemporary had once said of him: "You must not judge the man as you judge other naval officers—he is not of the Navy; he is not one of us."

Beatty came of old, hard-riding, hard-fighting Irish stock, and made little effort to conceal his disparaging opinion of the traditional manners and mental processes of the Royal Navy. In a service predominantly English, he was a temperamental Celtic anomaly, destined either to be forcibly ejected or to rise to the top—there was no half-way station.

His remarkable sequence of promotions had begun when, as a young lieutenant, he was given command of one of the gun-boats employed on the Nile during the Egyptian and Sudanese campaigns in the late 'nineties. The river-craft and their young naval commanders—another of them was Lieutenant Horace Hood, later Rear-Admiral Hood of Jutland renown—had rendered invaluable service to General Kitchener's operations. Of them all, Lieutenant Beatty's *Fateh* had stood out high above the others.

For distinguished gallantry the young officer had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order, and had been promoted to the rank of commander—a promotion which came six years earlier than it could normally have been expected, and which placed him ahead of three hundred and ninety-eight lieutenants normally senior to him.

Less than two years later he was posted to be captain—this time for exceptional tenacity and bravery in leading a force of bluejackets in the capture of Chinese batteries during the Boxer insurrection.

In 1900 he had become Captain David Beatty, D.S.O., twenty-nine years old, with only sixteen years' naval service; he held rank equal to that of John Jellicoe, eleven years his senior in age and four years his senior on the Navy List; he had been placed ahead of two hundred and nineteen commanders whose average age was forty-three!

"The step was almost unprecedented. Beatty joined the ranks of those who had been in the Service while he was yet

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unborn; those who had entered the navy with him were now left toiling in the rear!"

Professional jealousy inevitably led to fervent criticism of the man. How could anyone with so little sea experience perform the duties required of his new rank? What proof had he shown, by storming a battery, that he could command a modern ship of the line? It had been said of the Royal Navy that "promotion by seniority was almost a fetish." Beatty's rapid, unconventional advancement had been a bitter pill to many a competent, hard-working officer who felt himself more capable, more deserving, and equally valorous. Why couldn't the battery-stormer transfer to the Marines or the Horse Guards and leave the Navy to the seafarers?

On New Year's Day, 1910, Beatty was promoted to Flag rank—"the youngest admiral within living memory." The great Nelson had been made a rear-admiral at the age of thirty-eight; Beatty was thirty-nine.

As there was no command open at sea, he began his career as a Flag Officer ashore, waiting a vacant appointment.

But when the first vacancy occurred and was offered to him he declined the appointment, as though certain that a better command would be available.

The Service was shocked. Vacancies were scarce, a refusal unheard of. Those who believed Beatty's advancement had been undeserved, now felt they had convincing proof that his heart had never wholly been given to the Navy—at bottom he must prefer his estate and his horsy life ashore, would rather ride to hounds and play polo than walk the quarter-deck. Many officers contended that he should never be given another opportunity to fly his flag above a man-of-war.

It seemed that this would be the end of a brilliant and meteoric career. If three years passed without his doing active duty he would automatically be placed on the retired list.

Then, in 1911, Winston Churchill became First Lord of the Admiralty, and Beatty asked for an interview to discuss the question of duty afloat.

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"I had never met him before," Churchill wrote afterwards. "I was advised about him at the Admiralty in a decisively adverse sense. . . . He had been offered an appointment in the Atlantic Fleet suitable to his rank . . . had declined—a very serious step for a naval officer.

"But my first meeting with the admiral induced me immediately to disregard this unfortunate advice."

Two kindred spirits, Beatty and Churchill, had discovered one another—and Beatty went to duty at the Admiralty as Churchill's Naval Secretary.

In the spring of 1913 the command of the new Battle-Cruiser Squadron fell vacant and Churchill, considering the list of officers, had no doubt who should be appointed to the post.

Beatty was once more advanced over the heads of all and given an incomparable appointment. The squadron, most important single unit of ships in the Navy, went to the youngest admiral in the fleet as his first Flag command—ships which "proved to be the nucleus of the famous Battle-Cruiser Fleet, the strategic cavalry of the Navy. . . ."

David Beatty, fighter, sailor who had spent less than half his naval career on sea service, hoisted his flag in the *Lion*, battle-cruiser flagship.

In 1914 he was knighted. Now he was promoted to be an acting vice-admiral and given the Battle-Cruiser Fleet. He was forty-three years old.

When Britain and Germany had been three weeks at war active naval hostilities in the North Sea had been confined to unimportant incidents. The German auxiliary mine-layer *Königin Luise* had been surprised laying mines off Harwich on August 5, and sunk by the gunfire of the British light cruiser *Amphion*. Next day *Amphion* had run into one of the German mines and gone down with a loss of 149 officers and men and 18 German prisoners.

The only trace the Grand Fleet had seen of the enemy had been a single German submarine—one of ten which had been sent out from Wilhelmshaven to attack in accordance with the

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Emperor's order. The British battleship *Monarch* had sighted and dodged a torpedo on August 8; next day the light cruiser *Birmingham* had sighted the submarine and had rammed and sunk her.

Of the other nine German submarines, eight had made their way home, reporting no sign of the British fleet after a search as far north as the line between the Orkney Islands and Norway. The ninth was missing, never heard from again by either side.

Jellicoe, uneasy at the discovery that the enemy's U-boats could cruise as far as open Scapa Flow, had spent as little time in harbour as possible, keeping the Grand Fleet moving restlessly in the North Sea and seizing every opportunity for target, practice.

Meantime Britain's submarines, sent out to reconnoitre, had come back with reports of the German navy's exposed line of destroyers and light cruisers in the Heligoland Bight. At the end of August the British War Staff decided to raid these outposts—a movement intended to cover the landing of British troops at Ostend.

The Admiralty allotted the task, not to the Grand Fleet, but to the Harwich Force under Commodore Tyrwhitt—a detachment of fast cruisers and torpedo-craft kept in the south for the protection of the English Channel. Two light cruisers, thirty-one destroyers and six submarines were told off for the attack; the operation was to be supported by two battle-cruisers and a squadron of armoured cruisers temporarily withdrawn from the Grand Fleet; the date set was August 28.

When Jellicoe learned of the plan the first British ships had already put to sea and were steaming towards Germany.

The Commander-in-Chief felt that the Admiralty was making a dangerous mistake in the assumption that the proposed force would be strong enough for the duty assigned to it. The German navy was not to be taken so lightly—there was useless risk in thrusting torpedo-craft under the very nose of the High Sea Fleet without stronger covering units. On his own initiative, Jellicoe ordered Beatty south to the support with the remaining

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three battle-cruisers and Commodore Goodenough's First Light Cruiser Squadron. He himself went to sea with the whole Grand Fleet and lay in the distant background.

This recognition of Germany's fighting power saved the day.

At dawn on August 28, the Harwich Force came out of the "wet triangle's" mist, and took the German outposts by complete surprise. But the enemy rallied his strength. One German light cruiser after another came out of the rivers to support the harassed outpost destroyers, which were running for the shelter of Heligoland. Britain's numerical superiority was stemmed by the reckless aggressiveness and accurate shooting of the Germans. The new British light cruiser *Arethusa* found herself in serious difficulties before the ancient German *Frauenlob*, listed at half her fighting strength. *Arethusa* had been in commission less than forty-eight hours and had never fired a target-practice—only crass minimizing of the enemy's abilities had sent her out to this duty. *Frauenlob*, with a seasoned and well-trained crew, stood up to her in single-ship action and put twenty-five hits into her before being struck once in return.

The situation was critical when Beatty arrived. He came in the rôle of a rescuer—the Harwich Force had not even known that he was at sea. His huge battle-cruisers thundered out their turret-guns at the German light cruisers, crushing the enemy with weight of metal, turning the tide of battle into British victory. Meantime, in Wilhelmshaven, the High Sea Fleet, caught within the dockyard locks by the tide, was unable to come out to the scene.

As the British withdrew, they left four sunken German ships—the light cruisers *Cöln*, *Ariadne* and *Mainz*, and the destroyer *V-187*. Two of the cruisers had fallen to Beatty's flagship *Lion*. Germany had lost 718 men killed, while the retiring British took with them 381 German prisoners, among them the son of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz. Rear-Admiral Maass, one of Germany's most energetic younger Flag officers, had gone down with the *Cöln*.

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The only British injuries had been considerable damage to two ships, in which 32 men had been killed and 55 wounded.

This episode had serious reverberations within the German navy. Among the "inferiority" group, it led to a greater respect than ever for Britain's prestige. Among those who argued for a strong fleet policy, it led to severe criticism of Admiral von Ingenohl for allowing his heavy forces to be bottled up by the tide. In the light craft, it was the first of a series of occasions which caused a growing belief that Germany's torpedo and cruiser forces would be left to shift for themselves whenever the enemy appeared.

In Britain the event was hailed as a brilliant victory, the first really good news of the war. Vice-Admiral Beatty, hero of the day, burst into the public prints to be received by the nation as a conqueror. The Royal Navy had swept the sea in the traditional manner of the immortal past!

Small wonder that details of Beatty's spectacular career were revived, that his photograph appeared all over Britain. Here was a man with the magic gift of success. Here was someone to lead Britain, nation of seafarers, to seafaring victory—a figure to pit against Germany, to counterbalance the tragedy in France.

CHAPTER VII

STRATEGY

IT was fortunate for Britain that she possessed one man with sufficient insight to appraise Germany's naval strength at its full value, and that he was stationed where he could control the most important theatre of the naval war—the North Sea. Jellicoe's prescience in sending Beatty into the Heligoland Bight was only one evidence of the continual ability to thwart the enemy, which was the hall-mark of his naval skill.

The Grand Fleet's admiral had the gift of all great naval commanders—an unerring and positive judgment, uncoloured by sentiment or illusion, of the relative powers of his own forces as compared with the enemy. Jellicoe had come to the decision within the first weeks of the war that the numerical strength of the German navy was no criterion of its fighting ability—that the fighting power of Germany's individual ships was far greater than most British naval officers had anticipated, and considerably greater than the strength of individual British ships as they then mustered.

This discovery had had a profound effect upon the strategical situation. In the first place, it made the outcome of a fleet battle an uncertain quantity, which must temper Britain's readiness to accept action for the time being. In the second place, and more serious, it made undefended Scapa Flow worthless as a base.

Scapa Flow had been chosen several years earlier, when Britain had decided to establish a long-range blockade if the remote possibility of a war with Germany ever became fact. The traditional close blockade, just outside the enemy's harbours, had been made impossible by that new weapon, the submarine.

The arguments in favour of Scapa Flow had been three: (1): it covered the new blockade line; (2): from it the fleet could

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cut off the German retreat in case Germany attempted operations against the British coast; (3): its distance from the nearest German base made it safe from raids or attack, as Britain had information that Germany's destroyers and submarines did not bunker sufficient fuel to give them an attacking radius of 475 miles.

But German submarine activities were being pushed with the utmost daring, and with such success that Jellicoe, realizing the prominent, perhaps decisive, part this new weapon would play in the war, bent his entire immediate strategy to countering its effects.

The first futile cruise of Germany's U-boats had been followed by others, which not only located Scapa as the Grand Fleet's base, but brought back information as to the routes patrolled and areas watched by the British ships. Concentrating on these points the attack had scored a series of triumphs. The light cruiser *Pathfinder* had been torpedoed and sunk; hard afterwards the armoured cruisers *Aboukir*, *Cressy*, and *Hogue* had been sent down one after another by a single submarine while they were patrolling in the North Sea; in the blockade line, the blockading cruiser *Hawke* had been sunk—2,246 officers and men had lost their lives with these ships. Submarines had appeared off Scapa and boldly entered Hoxa Sound, bent on sending dreadnoughts to the bottom.

Germany had struck. Jellicoe was as quick to parry. His first move—a temporary and emergency expedient—was to abandon Scapa, withdrawing his entire force with utter secrecy beyond submarine range to the west coast of Scotland and the waters north of Ireland. From this point he could still protect the blockade line, the most important feature of his strategy, but he had left the North Sea free if the enemy fleet chose to enter it—and the coasts of England were all but undefended. Scapa Flow must be given submarine defences and be properly fortified in the shortest time possible, so that the Grand Fleet could trust it as a safe and permanent operating base. And the fleet must perfect anti-submarine tactics, both for cruising and for battle.

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Jellicoe was completely occupied in making sure that the enemy's plan to cut down his battle strength by underwater attacks should not be realized. He notified the Admiralty that in certain circumstances, if he found himself in battle with hostile forces, he proposed to break off action rather than advance into submarine waters. The pursuit of a retreating foe appeared doubly dangerous, both as a lure to draw him into a submarine trap, and because the retiring vessels might lay mine-fields as they went.

The Admiralty signified its official approval of this cardinal change in Britain's traditional battle tactics. For the first time for centuries the policy "attack on sight, and pursue until the enemy is annihilated," was modified.

But even while Jellicoe was perfecting his defensive measures, the German auxiliary cruiser *Berlin* had slipped to sea, run the British blockade and completed a long mine-laying voyage north of the British Isles. On October 27, the new British dreadnought *Audacious*, one of the finest ships in the Grand Fleet's battle-line, ran upon a mine in waters believed absolutely safe, and sank twelve hours later. Thus far, using only a handful of submarines and a few auxiliaries, Germany had secured all the honours in the North Sea warfare.

Jellicoe's appreciation of the enemy's powers was in contrast to the generally over-confident attitude of the Royal Navy, which had made itself dangerously felt at the Admiralty in Whitehall.

Jellicoe wielded British sea-power to exercise control of the North Sea. The Admiralty, in supreme command of the entire Royal Navy, wielded the Empire's total strength in sea-power, to exercise, presumably, absolute control over all the seas in the world beyond the German Baltic, the Austrian Adriatic, and that narrow strait, the Turkish Dardanelles.

Yet, despite the great number of British ships on foreign station and the numerous distant strategic naval bases from which they operated, the Admiralty's efforts to track down and destroy the German cruisers which were playing havoc on the high seas had been unsuccessful. From the day *Goeben* and *Breslau* had

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run half the length of the Mediterranean to escape into the Dardanelles—where they served as a powerful inducement to bring Turkey into the war on the side of the Central Powers—Britain's foreign squadrons had searched the oceans in a series of futile pursuits, advertising their movements by the use of their wireless. The German ships, taking fuel from captured merchantmen, had eluded their pursuers with ease—had raided commerce, appeared before the harbours of enemy insular possessions, destroying wireless stations and cutting cables. The Admiralty's inept strategy had been typified by the decision to send the old light cruiser *Pegasus* to protect the island of Zanzibar from the German light cruiser *Königsberg*, known to be operating in those waters. *Königsberg*, more than half again as large as the British ship and in every way superior in fighting power, had appeared off Zanzibar harbour on September 20, and had sunk the *Pegasus* in fifty minutes of good shooting—the gallant heroism of the British officers and men had not made up for the fact that their ship's out-dated guns could not range within a thousand yards of the attacker.

The naval crisis, which had arisen at the end of October, found "Jacky," Lord Fisher, Baron of Kilverstone, accepting recall to duty at the Admiralty as First Sea Lord. Fisher, "most distinguished British naval officer since Nelson," was 73 years old. He had been in retirement since January, 1910, after a long and brilliant career, but still possessed all the fiery personality which had spent a lifetime preaching preparation for war—"hit first, hit hard, and keep on hitting!"—had built the Grand Fleet, and carried out the most sweeping reforms the Royal Navy had ever known.

"Watch the Navy now! Old Fisher is back in the saddle!"

But Fisher's emergency measures for sweeping reorganization of the Admiralty were no sooner proposed than the blackest of all the news of these black months arrived—the first real shock to British naval supremacy for over a century.

The weak British Cruiser Squadron under the gallant "One-eyed Chris" Cradock, sent out to track down Count von Spee's

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intrepid and powerful Asiatic Cruiser Squadron, had met the enemy and been annihilated!

Von Spee's five ships, famous for their shooting, their fine spirit and their discipline, had crossed the South Pacific, and were near the southern tip of South America on their way home.

Cradock had met them at sea off the Chilean coastal town of Coronel on November 1. The action that followed was one between inadequate, scattered British ships, manned by courageous but half-trained reservists, and "a crack-shooting, homogeneous, fast German force."

Not a single British survivor remained to recount the death agonies of the cruisers *Good Hope* and *Monmouth*, which had gone down into the darkness and the angry sea, battle-flags flying, guns firing to the end. There was no relic of the two ships, save a seaman's lanyard picked up by a Chilean fisherman weeks later. Sixteen hundred and fifty-four British seamen had been killed in the battle; the German squadron had not lost a single man, and had had only two wounded.

Britain was stunned. The news that a British naval force could be so decisively defeated was difficult to comprehend.

Was this the naval parallel to the victories of the German armies in France and Russia? Was British sea-power a myth? German submarines, mine-layers and cruisers had sunk 100,000 tons of British men-of-war in two short months; the death roll of British seamen had reached four thousand. Was Coronel, fought on the fringes of the Antarctic, a forecast of what would happen when German and British Battle Fleets met to decide the supremacy of the North Sea?

Fisher thought not. Furious that his predecessors had believed the enemy could be conquered by the mere flaunting of the white ensign, he ordered the battle-cruisers *Invincible* and *Inflexible* to be detached from the Grand Fleet and made ready for overseas duty. Hard afterwards he detached a third battle-cruiser, the *Princess Royal*. Three days were allowed for necessary preparations—no more.

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Jellicoe protested against the weakening of the Grand Fleet. These ships were urgently needed at home—their departure would offer Germany a dangerous advantage in the North Sea. Fisher, willing to gamble, overruled him.

The three British battle-cruisers were infinitely superior in strength to the vessels of the distant German admiral. *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, capable of 28 knots speed, mounted batteries of eight 12-inch guns. *Princess Royal*, speed 30 knots, had eight 13.5-inch guns and was a sister to Beatty's flagship *Lion*. The trio sailed into the Atlantic, carrying with them dockyard-workers who laboured ahead at the minor uncompleted repairs. Every precaution had been taken to conceal the enterprise from the German Intelligence Service. *Princess Royal* was to steam four thousand miles at high speed to the entrance to the Panama Canal, and wait there in case von Spee chose that route home.

Invincible and *Inflexible* had been placed under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir Doveton Sturdee, relieved from duty as Chief of the Naval War Staff. Fisher bore no love for Sturdee, thought him in part responsible for the tragedies at Coronel and Zanzibar. "Let him see what he can do to clean up the mess." Sturdee had orders to proceed into the South Atlantic, to stop von Spee at all costs—to advance round the Horn into the Pacific, if necessary, and search for him.

On December 7, Sturdee's battle-cruisers reached the Falkland Islands, Britain's strategic naval depot, whaling base and sheep-raising colony, 200 miles off the Atlantic entrance to the Straits of Magellan. Here Admiral Sturdee effected rendezvous with seven other British naval vessels in the almost landlocked harbour of Port Stanley, and for the first time during the war Britain had established a concentration of strength capable of making short work of her overseas enemies. But at the outset, the purpose of the operation was almost defeated through Sturdee's assumption that his strength rendered him immune to danger. Nothing had been heard of von Spee for several days. Sturdee decided to take twenty-four hours to clean boilers and coal his ships; next day he would begin a sweep to

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sea with his entire force, rounding Cape Horn in search of the Germans.

He was spared the need of searching. Early the next morning, December 8, while both British battle-cruisers had their boilers open and their decks littered with coaling gear, smoke was sighted off the Falkland Islands, and the harbour look-outs reported the approach of strange vessels. The sea was smooth, the visibility perfect. An hour later the ships proved to be the German squadron.

The British men-of-war were caught at anchor in a highly disadvantageous situation. If von Spee, strong and compact, pressed on resolutely, he would find his enemy struggling to raise steam, to clear the decks for action, caught in a small harbour whose one narrow entrance was exposed to deadly enfilading fire—the Germans would riddle one British ship after another as they came out, and if they did not come out, would trap them, anchored targets. . . . There would be another German victory—Spee had opportunity to make his name immortal, to destroy two British battle-cruisers, to inspire the High Sea Fleet to decisive action in the North Sea.

But von Spee hesitated, unaware of his advantage. He had not expected to find British battle-cruisers at the Falklands.

An admiral is given no time for calm reflection. He draws, in swift minutes, the conclusions that determine sea-power and affect the fates of nations. Surprise, astonishment, shock are only part of the problem.

Von Spee was short of munitions. His ships were precious. The goal which had lured him for weeks was Wilhelmshaven, where he hoped to add his strength to the High Sea Fleet. If his force were lost or crippled before this apparently superior antagonist, that hope was dashed and his cruise half-way round the world had been in vain. If he joined action and held the enemy off, it would be at the cost of emptying his magazines—he would be left without gun-power for the final, most dangerous stage of his journey. He decided not to assume the offensive, but to seek safety in instant flight.

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And here, as in the North Sea, Germany's decision not to attack against odds, threw away another of her priceless opportunities for naval victory and victory in the war.

Having turned to run, it was too late for the German admiral to recover his momentary advantage, and he was lost. The heavy British vessels began to steam out of the harbour of Port Stanley, crowding on speed, stowing the last of the coaling gear, and making final, urgent preparations for battle. Sturdee's dreadnought-cruisers were forcing the boilers to the point of danger, driving the turbines to fifteen, eighteen, twenty-two knots.

In an attempt to avoid the British concentration, von Spee took a desperate step and commanded his forces to scatter. With the two strongest cruisers, *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, he made a stand to cover the retreat of the others. His ships, which had held disciplined formation for so many thousands of miles, parted company, and the admiral signalled his final message:

It is my wish and belief that you will conduct yourselves with a gallantry equal to that of Admiral Cradock and his men off Coronel.

Thus, he who was about to die, saluted his opponents.

And in that manner, with a gallantry equal to that of the British under Cradock, the Germans went to their deaths before British guns which fired from a distance at which their own were ineffective. To the bitter end they fought stubbornly, and as their ships went down they rallied to the battle-flag of their Fatherland, singing their national anthem and cheering their Emperor.

Four ships—*Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig*—were sunk. Only *Dresden*, a light cruiser, escaped, to cruise alone for four months until she was trapped the following March in the Juan Fernandez Islands. The German dead included Admiral Count von Spee, the two sons who were serving with him, and over 2,100 officers and men. The British loss was six

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killed and nineteen wounded. Two hundred and twelve German survivors were rescued from the sea and taken prisoners.

The battle of the Falkland Islands was the sole occasion during the war in which Britain was able to effect a crushing superiority leading to an annihilating victory against an enemy squadron. Fisher's gamble had been well repaid.

When the news of the victory reached England, it had begun to seem that only miracles could stop the unbroken stream of German successes.

But just as in September a miracle, aided by the presence of the British First Army, had held Germany before the gates of Paris, now another miracle had occurred to restore Britain's faith in the prowess of the Royal Navy.

Yet the German High Sea Fleet was still to be dealt with.

CHAPTER VIII

HIPPER

HAD the High Sea Fleet been operating under an aggressive policy, it would have been difficult for the Germans, during these months, to avoid decisive North Sea successes.

At the time of the Falklands battle, the German navy had been strengthened by the arrival of three newly-completed dreadnought battleships of the *König* class, bringing the battleship total to sixteen. In addition, the battle-cruiser squadron had been joined by the new *Derfflinger*—most remarkable ship Germany had ever built—so that the battle-cruisers with the fleet now numbered four.

Germany had a total of twenty capital ships, supported by a squadron of eight pre-dreadnoughts and by adequate cruiser and destroyer forces.

And in Britain's Royal Navy the force necessary to deal successfully with this powerful fleet was neither available nor likely to be available in the near future. Jellicoe had begun the war with twenty dreadnought-battleships. The loss of the *Audacious* and the breakdown of others due to engineering defects—caused by the lack of a base and the consequent continual steaming at high speed—had temporarily reduced the Grand Fleet's battleship strength to seventeen. In battle-cruisers, new ships and the arrival of others from the Mediterranean had increased the original six to nine, but three of these had been detached for the pursuit of Count von Spee, and one was absent in the dockyard, so that only five were available for North Sea operations.

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Jellicoe had a total of only twenty-two capital ships to oppose the enemy's twenty. This was no advantage. If the fleets met, it would be to all intents and purposes ship against ship, and thus far events had indicated that the Germans would display surprising and probably superior strength and hitting power in action of this kind. For the time being, Jellicoe had adopted a strictly defensive strategy, while he bent every effort to strengthening his fleet, working up his gunnery and hastening the defences at Scapa; it was a time of acute anxiety—the next three or four months would be decisive, as the British dockyards were rushing new dreadnoughts to completion which would restore Britain's lost superiority. Jellicoe was genuinely puzzled that the enemy fleet failed to attack. Certainly, the British weakness was being concealed behind such camouflage as a squadron of dummy battleships—merchant vessels with canvas turrets and wooden guns—which had hastily been prepared, but it was small comfort to defend the British Empire with weapons like these. Had the German policy been aggressive the enemy would have learned the situation soon enough.

Meantime, the High Sea Fleet chafed as Germany's naval officers and men felt that days of opportunity were being lost. Stung by the naval command's passive leadership, the German navy wanted to strike. Life in port satisfied no one.

The restlessness was buried beneath an iron discipline which demanded that military men obey the orders of their superiors without question. It was the fleet's duty to carry out the Emperor's commands with absolute loyalty. Yet the division of opinion growing up within the German navy, the increasingly widespread distrust of the fleet leadership, led groups of influential officers to exert pressure upon Admiral von Ingenohl, and through him upon the Chief of the Naval Staff and the Emperor.

"Cast us loose!" they demanded. "Give the fleet freedom of action!"

By November this pressure finally succeeded in releasing the High Sea Fleet's battle-cruiser squadron for aggressive North

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Sea operations. As before, the battleships were not to be risked.

Under the command of Rear-Admiral Hipper, the battle-cruisers went to sea and used their new freedom with reckless daring, fairly shocking the German High Command and alarming the British by steaming at high speed all the way to the English coast and bombarding Yarmouth with the first enemy shells to fall upon English soil since the time of the Dutch wars. One of Jellicoe's vulnerable "boundaries" had been penetrated.

It had been a rash deed by three unsupported capital ships, but such was the temper of the fleet personnel—Hipper was a fearless man who had risked his vessels to make a gesture of defiance. The fleet hailed the deed and was filled with admiration for the commander who they thought had matched Beatty's temerity.

Franz Hipper was a Bavarian, an officer of the best type the young German navy had produced. Born far inland, at Weilheim, he had entered the service in 1881; he came of educated, upper middle-class stock—a tall man, distinguished in appearance, wearing the clipped moustache and imperial common to many German naval officers—essentially a sailor, reserved to the point of silence, never entering the lists of political or social intrigue, earning his promotions by professional merit. He liked music, hunting and cigars; he was known for his charm and a sparkling humour—it was a peculiar circumstance of fate that singled out this most temperate and gallant of German naval officers as the target for Britain's bitterest invective, gave him the title of "the Baby-killer," and fixed on him the responsibility for the Emperor's naval policies.

Hipper had served in the yacht *Hohenzollern* as a lieutenant, and had become personally acquainted with the Emperor, who had recognized in him a young officer of promise. Steady advancement had made him a captain in 1907; later he had done duty chiefly in the cruiser squadrons of the High Sea Fleet, seeing little of foreign waters. In 1911 he became second in command of the Home Cruiser Squadron, and at the outbreak of

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the war had risen to rear-admiral, commanding the First Scouting Group (battle-cruisers)—a most important appointment, corresponding largely to that of Beatty in the enemy forces. In 1914 he was 51 years old, eight years older than Beatty, who was his direct naval antagonist.

Hipper had not been the man to protest openly against the Emperor's restriction of the fleet's activities, nor could he ever join sides in the navy's internal factions. But when ordered to take his ships to sea, it was his nature to avail himself of the opportunity to the utmost—to break through the barriers of Imperial restraint, and strike with all his might as a man of action. In this he differed from his Chief, Admiral von Ingenohl.

The November raid against Yarmouth was the direct cause of the High Sea Fleet's next venture. To the surprise of the High Command, Hipper's stroke had achieved favourable results, both at home and abroad. The Emperor allowed the "action" group of officers to persuade him to repeat the gesture.

But this time Hipper must not be sent out alone. Germany must reckon with British opposition, for Britain was not an enemy to be taken twice by surprise.

Von Ingenohl would support Hipper's second raid by taking the entire High Sea Fleet into the middle of the North Sea.

The day of the venture, December 16, 1914, was one which found the western half of the North Sea shrouded with fog and winter gale; high seas were running, making the use of destroyers all but impossible. The ships which were sent out were drenched with freezing water that beat high over the bows; the navigating personnel crouched behind the bridge screens in their wet oilskins, envying the men below decks—and the stokers, swaying before the glowing boiler doors, cursed the need to keep up steam in this weather.

Germany had been correct in anticipating that Britain would be ready for Hipper. The British Admiralty, on the alert since the previous raid, had intercepted the enemy's wireless

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messages and was fully aware that German ships were at sea—moreover, felt certain that Hipper would strike at the British coast, though no one could say where.

To counter Hipper, Beatty had been sent out into the fog with four British battle-cruisers—all that were available—and the six available battleships of the Second Battle Squadron under Vice-Admiral Warrender. As scouts and screening vessels the British force had the First Light Cruiser Squadron under Commodore Goodenough, the Third Cruiser Squadron, and seven destroyers.

But the Admiralty had assumed that the main body of the High Sea Fleet would remain in harbour as before, and had held Jellicoe and the Grand Fleet at anchor at Scapa Flow.

Beatty's forces, capable of dealing with Hipper, were totally inadequate to meet von Ingenohl if the latter appeared—ten British capital ships had been sent to sea in the face of eighteen heavy German vessels, which were actually moving westward. If the situation led to an engagement a disaster for Britain was inescapable.

At twilight of the stormy winter morning, Hipper reached the Yorkshire coast after an all-night run, and divided his squadron for attack. He had seen no sign of the British force. The huge grey German battle-cruisers, wraithlike in the thick weather offshore, began a heavy bombardment of the coastal towns, Hartlepool, Scarborough and Whitby.

Meantime Beatty, far out in the North Sea, had taken a position to cut off the German retreat once the spot of Hipper's attack was known and communicated to him by wireless.

But at about the time that Hipper's guns began to thunder and German projectiles were exploding inshore, Beatty's scouts met the vanguard of destroyers ahead of Ingenohl's High Sea Fleet, and under fearful weather conditions gunfire opened between these enemy outriders.

Here, in the fifth month of the war, was the first "contact"

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between major units of the opposing fleets. Announced by the sharp crash of broadsides, this was the moment for which German and British seamen had been praying. If Ingenohl chose to close and attack, he could do battle with all the cards in his favour.

But Admiral von Ingenohl, receiving the "contact" report, knew only that somewhere ahead, out of sight, there was an enemy of uncertain strength and numbers. Perhaps no more than a flotilla of destroyers—perhaps Britain's entire Grand Fleet.

He felt that he did not dare risk a meeting. Bound by the Emperor's order to avoid battle except under "favourable" conditions, he concluded that the present conditions were unfavourable, and hoisted the signal which turned Germany's battle-line upon its heel to head for Wilhelmshaven. Hipper was left to his own devices.

No mistake ever made at sea had further reaching consequences. Wilhelm II and von Ingenohl, between them, had started Germany on the road to downfall.

Beatty, likewise receiving report of the brief contact, awaited further developments which did not come. Thinking of Hipper, he continued his cruising movement—the two forces parted without discovering each other's real nature.

When the German navy learned the facts, and fully understood what an opportunity had been lost through the failure of the High Sea Fleet's leader to go forward to battle, von Tirpitz wrote: "On December 16 Ingenohl had the fate of Germany in the hollow of his hand. I burst with inner indignation whenever I think of it."

But still there was no change in the High Sea Fleet's command.

Hipper had finished his bombardment and was striking for home. The fog was thick; the German battle-cruisers drove into mountainous seas, wallowing in laborious movement, beating up giant masses of spray and churning foam. The smell of powder-smoke was in the ships; the crews, half-deafened

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by their work at the guns, stood to their stations, tingling with excitement and danger.

They had fired over two thousand shells. Two British naval coast-defence ships had been damaged. The shore batteries, coastguard stations, two important engineering establishments, and four merchant ships had suffered; 16 men of the defence forces had lost their lives and 25 been injured. Three towns bore the marks and wreckage of shell-fire; over three hundred houses had been damaged; 106 non-combatants, including many women and 15 children, had been killed, while 530 lay wounded. The British Press would never refer to Admiral Hipper again except as "the Baby-killer."

Wireless information from the Admiralty had notified Beatty that the enemy had struck, and the British commander was steaming through the fog, damning the thick weather and hoping to intercept the enemy's retreat.

In the fog, two British light cruisers encountered the German ships. There was a moment of confusion, and before gunfire could be opened, the thickness swallowed up the vision. The British vessels wheeled in pursuit, signalling the vital information to Beatty by wireless.

Beatty was just sending a radio-message from his flagship *Lion* to other portions of his scouting force, ordering two detached vessels to resume their cruising formation. The ships in pursuit of Hipper misinterpreted this signal as an answer to their own—a command to break off the chase. They wheeled obediently back towards the British flagship—and lost the enemy.

Steaming unobserved at high speed, Hipper passed close to the British line, hidden in the fog. In five minutes he was two miles east; in a quarter of an hour, six miles, driving further every minute.

It was the British turn to feel, as full realization of the situation was borne in upon them, that they had lost an opportunity which would never return. Echoing von Tirpitz's cry, a

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Briton wrote: "Nothing could have saved them—and we let them go!"

The day had been a German victory—but a victory without strategical purpose, marred by the reaction stirred throughout the world by the killing of civilians, women and babies. Ingenohl had thrown away a decisive triumph against an enemy vastly inferior in fighting strength. Beatty, through a defective signal system, had allowed the retreating Hipper to escape.

Behind everything lay the fog and the weather, which made the North Sea the most difficult of battlegrounds and turned strategy and tactics, on occasions like this, into "a heart-breaking game of blind-man's buff."

CHAPTER IX

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THE turrets of a battle-cruiser rested upon barbettes of face-hardened steel, which extended deep down within the ship's hull—cylinders of armour, roughly twenty feet in diameter and twenty-five feet in height. The armour-thickness varied in different ships—in Beatty's *Lion* it was nine inches; in Hipper's flagship *Seydlitz* it was ten inches and a half. A barbette weighed somewhere about three hundred tons, constructed in heavy curving plates fitted together to form a whole.

Machinery for hoisting shell and powder to the guns ran up and down within the barbettes. Each shell weighed roughly half a ton—somewhat more in the case of the heavy British guns; rather less for the German 11-inch. The powder-charge—three to four hundred pounds—was sufficient to send the projectile through the air for eleven miles, at a speed of 25 miles a minute.

The magazines and shell-rooms were deep within the ships, with doors opening on to the lower handing-rooms at the bottom of the barbettes. The powder, kept in the magazines, was put up in silk bags, two or three bags to the "load." Germany further employed brass cartridge-cases for the rear portion of the load, to give added safety from fire and greater accuracy of shooting, though it involved disposing of the empty case after each shot.

The heavy weights of powder and shell necessitated powerful hoisting machinery. Every twenty seconds, while the guns were firing, two shells and two charges of powder must arrive in the upper handing-room for relay into the turret.

The loading crews, drilled to perform their labour with

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automatic skill, leaped to their places as the gun finished its recoil. The "cage" containing the fresh charge came roaring up from below. Hydraulic rammers shoved the massive shell into the gun; the powder was thrust after it. It seemed incredible that from the opening of the breech-plug, until it snapped shut after loading, barely ten seconds elapsed.

The gun, projecting far out through the face of the turret, reared up at an uncompromising angle to a grinding of elevating motors; the breech sank down into the pit. In the British ships the petty officer gun-layer followed the elevation-pointer of an automatic instrument, and never saw the object at which his gun was aimed. In the German ships he looked at the target through a telescopic-sight.

To keep the guns trained upon the target the whole turret was moving round in azimuth, turning upon smooth roller-bearings—a movement controlled by a second petty officer, who followed the pointer of an automatic instrument in both navies.

There were seventy men in the crew of a turret, stationed in groups at the different levels, each group separate from the others, invisible to its fellows, yet working in harmony to supply ammunition, to load, aim and fire the guns. The officer was in a booth at the rear of the gun-chamber, with voice-tubes leading to both guns and down into the barbette; he was in telephonic communication with the control-central.

In an armoured gun-control tower, close to the ship's captain, the senior gunnery officer commanded the battery. For calculating the gun-settings there was a central station where the distance to the target, as measured by optical range-finders, was converted into gun-range. Aloft, at the mast-heads, officers observed the fall of shot through powerful binoculars, while delicate sighting instruments followed the enemy's movements and gave the turrets their "aim."

In the British ships the guns of a turret broadside were fired together from a single electric firing-key. The new device which made this possible—the "gun-director"—was

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Britain's most precious gunnery secret. Germany had not yet developed a "director"—each individual gun-layer fired his own gun when the signal for a salvo was given. Both navies, when firing from turrets, ordinarily fired right and left guns alternately—a ship with four turrets bearing upon the target fired four-gun salvos, the right guns of each turret firing while the left guns were loading, and vice versa.

On the night of January 22-23, 1915, British and German turrets alike were manned. The men alternated four hours on duty, four hours below—half the guns were in constant readiness for action. The battle-cruisers were at sea.

Electric lights shone on the white paint and gleaming machinery within the barbettes. The shells had been painted in distinctive colours to indicate their purpose and bursting charge—armour-piercing, high explosive, common charge. In the turrets, dim lights reflected the shining, monstrous breeches of the guns; the loading crews talked together in low voices through the weary hours. The ships quivered with a steady vibration from the engines, so that they all knew the urgent speed with which the squadrons were being driven; they thrust forward with a long, slow roll and heave, and there were the thousand restless noises of swift passage—muffled sounds of water, of machinery, of wind and gear.

Hipper was steaming west with three battle-cruisers and the large armoured cruiser *Blücher*, accompanied by four light cruisers and nineteen destroyers, striking towards the Dogger Bank.

Beatty, warned in detail by the British wireless interception and decoding service, had put to sea from Rosyth, where Britain's Battle-Cruiser Fleet was now based, while Commodore Tyrwhitt's flotillas from Harwich were steaming north to meet him. Forty-seven ships comprised the British force, among them the battle-cruisers *Lion*, *Tiger*, *Princess Royal*, *New Zealand* and *Indomitable*.

At the same time Jellicoe had set out from Scapa Flow

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with the bulk of the Grand Fleet to support Beatty's movement.

The only one of the four main combatant units which had not taken the sea was the High Sea Fleet under von Ingenohl. The German dreadnoughts had been kept at anchor at Schillig Road to "cover the battle-cruisers' retreat," if need arose. And Ingenohl's strongest squadron, the Third, had been detached and sent away through the canal into the Baltic, to carry out target practice—the German admiral was in insufficient strength to meet the British main fleet.

At four o'clock in the morning, when the watches changed, Hipper's force was still steaming resolutely westward towards the Dogger Bank, pushing on at high speed. Its purpose was to sweep the sea of suspicious British craft which had been reported in that area. They were all dark. Far ahead of the battle-cruisers the destroyers had been thrown out as scouts. The German admiral was unaware that Britain had learned every detail of his plan by decoding German wireless messages, and that great numbers of enemy vessels were gathering to intercept him, although he was wary and on the alert for any form of surprise.

Beatty, about fifty miles away, was steaming towards the appointed rendezvous with the flotillas from Harwich.

The January dawn did not come until seven in the morning. When it arrived the sea was sullen—a grey day with fairly good visibility, eight or ten miles. In the half-light the look-outs searched the horizon for smoke or other signs of the enemy.

Before eight the juncture between Beatty and Tyrwhitt was effected, and at the same time Hipper's scouts sent urgent wireless notification to the German admiral that they had come into contact with British forces. The meeting of the three units took place like a predestined event—indeed, Britain had arranged the triple rendezvous.

Hipper acted instantly to withdraw. He was in no strength to attack—that was the paradox of his presence at sea. He

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wheeled to a reverse course and began to retreat rapidly towards Germany, nearly ten hours' steaming distance away. Wireless messages called in the outriders; the German vessels took flight for their lives.

The situation was not what Beatty had hoped. He had wanted to place himself across Hipper's line of retreat so that he could force a battle on his own terms. No matter—he would overtake the retiring enemy. He set out at full speed to overhaul the German battle-cruisers with the faster British ships.

At nine o'clock the British battle-cruisers, driving furiously, had come within gun-range of the German *Seydlitz*, *Derfflinger*, *Moltke* and *Blücher*. The turrets on both sides began shooting at the maximum distance of which they were capable, while the opposing squadrons continued their wild progress under every bit of steam the stokers could force out of the express boilers.

Almost at once *Blücher*, last in the German column and nearest to the British guns, was hit. She was the weakest of Hipper's line, rated as an armoured cruiser—she belonged neither in this powerful company nor in this exposed position. Her plating offered no resistance to the heavy British shells, which penetrated her armour to explode within her interior. After several heavy hits, her engine spaces were penetrated and she began to fall behind, still firing valiantly.

Hipper's flagship, at the head of the German column, was struck at 9.25. This hit was followed by a second fifteen minutes later, when a 13.5-inch projectile from the *Lion* penetrated *Seydlitz's* quarter-deck and burst in a thundering detonation against a joint in the after turret's barbette armour with serious results. The joint gave way; red hot plating and shell fragments flew inside the barbette and set fire to a charge of powder. A sheet of flaming powder-gas killed every man in the turret . . . flames shot through the open door into the adjoining turret, set fire to another powder-charge . . . all the "ready" powder in both turrets was afire . . . the crew of the

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second turret died where they stood, while a towering pillar of flame shot out high above the ship—higher than the masthead.

The magazines? Three men—Executive Officer *Korvettenkapitän* Hagedorn, Gunner's Mate Müller, and Chief Artificer Hering—forced their way through suffocating gases in the mazy lower decks to reach the emergency magazine flooding valves. They found the valves glowing a dull red from the heat of the turret fire. With the flesh searing from their hands they turned the handles and admitted the tons of water which saved the ship from destruction. Meantime, in the gunnery control station, the ship's doom had appeared certain, and the gunnery officer had ordered rapid fire, to do as much damage as possible to the enemy before she sank. The remaining turrets were belching out right and left-gun salvos every ten seconds. . . .

When six hundred tons of water had poured in, the crisis was past.

It was a full hour of continual shooting before the British secured another hit on one of the three German leaders, when a turret shell struck *Derfflinger* at 10.40, but burst against armour without doing serious damage. This was the third and last hit scored against Hipper's battle-cruisers.

During the gun duel, the German fire had been concentrating upon Beatty's flagship, *Lion*. The second ship in the British column, *Tiger*, had been struck twice, but *Lion* had quivered twelve times under the impact of heavy projectiles. Her side armour had been beaten in amidships, admitting water that flooded her coal bunkers and gave her a serious list. She had had a fierce powder fire in a forward turret, putting the turret out of action, killing most of its crew and endangering the ship. Her decks were a litter of wreckage, her wireless antennæ had been destroyed, she had only two signal halyards left, and by eleven o'clock she was unable to keep her station in the lead of the British column.

Beatty found the battle sweeping on ahead of him, the Germans disappearing from his sight to the east, the five undamaged British battle-cruisers thundering after them. He

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hoisted the signals: "Attack the enemy's rear" and "Keep closer to the enemy," and prepared to transfer his flag to a destroyer, to chase after the action and resume the command, which had automatically passed to the rear-admiral in the *New Zealand*.

The British ships had already made one serious mistake in interpreting signals during the day; the order to distribute gunfire upon all four of the enemy vessels had been wrongly carried out, so that no British fire had been directed at the German battle-cruiser *Moltke*, although she had been the nearest and best battle-cruiser target.

Now, for the second time, Beatty's commands were misinterpreted. Instead of continuing the pursuit after the retreating Hipper, the admiral in the *New Zealand* construed the "rear" of the enemy to designate the unfortunate *Blücher* for his target. Beatty's signal "Keep closer to the enemy" was not taken in at all.

Blücher, badly hit, had fallen far behind her consorts, and the entire British fire was now concentrated upon the luckless armoured cruiser while Hipper steamed off out of sight to the eastward. *Blücher*, though her situation was hopeless, refused to surrender, but replied with every gun she was able to work.

She had suffered fearful damage, yet she was still fighting when she rolled over and sank. During three hours of battle she had received more than one hundred hits, of all calibres, and been struck twice by torpedoes. Twice she had beaten off the attacks of British light craft. Now, as she was sinking, dozens of her crew appeared, sliding down her slimy side plating and dropping into the water. British destroyers steamed to rescue the survivors among their gallant antagonists, but the work of mercy was handicapped when a German aeroplane flew overhead, and mistaking the sinking ship for a British vessel—she was the only ship in the German navy fitted with a tripod mast of the British type—dropped bombs on British and Germans alike. Seven hundred and ninety-two men of *Blücher's* crew were lost—the British were able to rescue only 237, of whom 45 were wounded.

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When Beatty, furious at the discovery that his orders had not been carried out, finally rejoined his squadrons, it was too late to overtake the vanished Hipper and the pursuit was abandoned.

The battle of the Dogger Bank ended the skirmishing phase of the naval war, and left the British Royal Navy in undisputed mastery of the seas. Germany's overseas cruisers had either been destroyed or run to cover by superior forces before which their fighting powers were ineffectual. In the North Sea, the destruction of the *Blücher* had revived all the German Emperor's uncertainty for his capital ships, and led to a renewal of the ban upon battle-cruiser operations; von Ingenohl was removed from the command of the High Sea Fleet for failure to support Hipper's venture, and replaced by Admiral von Pohl, who carried out the royal desires by adopting a policy of complete fleet inactivity.

Yet Britain's mastery of the North Sea, granted her by the German Emperor, had not been truly earned in fighting, and was founded on a fiction of past reputation. Jellicoe was one of the few men who sensed this, and laboured to overcome the dangerous condition; Beatty one of the many who did not.

At the Dogger Bank, each side had fired approximately one thousand heavy shells in the battle-cruiser duel. The high speed and extreme range had made shooting difficult. Germany had secured fourteen hits to Britain's three, and had battered the *Lion* out of action, while Britain's battle-cruisers had done real damage only to the inferior *Blücher*. The serious hit upon *Seydlitz* had been a fluke, which was not a genuine indication either of the strength of Britain's gun-power or the qualities of German armour.

The action had been broken off owing to a misinterpretation of British signals, and because Admiral Hipper had soundly considered it unwise to turn and attempt the rescue of the *Blücher* with three battle-cruisers against five, one of his ships having two turrets out of action.

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Jellicoe, undeceived by the "victory," continued to develop his strategy on the promise that he faced a fleet equal if not superior to his own, and to bend every effort to bring his dreadnoughts to an efficiency, particularly in shooting, that would match the German performance.

But Beatty emerged from the Dogger Bank battle with an unwarranted feeling of contempt for the antagonist who had run before him. He over-estimated the powers of his own none-too-accurate gunnery, believing he had made many more hits than was actually the case, and felt that his ships were quite good enough to deal with the Germans. No British action was taken to overcome the weaknesses which had been exposed in the British battle-cruisers—luck had saved the *Lion* from a devastating magazine explosion—although Germany was painstakingly remedying similar weaknesses after her experience with the *Seydlitz*.

No steps were taken to improve the British battle-cruisers' signal system, which had now several times proved itself inadequate at crucial moments.

Yet the Dogger Bank action added tremendously to Beatty's public reputation. An extraordinary photograph of the *Blücher* as she rolled over appeared in the *Daily Mail*—the admiral was thrust more firmly into the rôle of the Royal Navy's leading and most successful man of action. He would sink every ship in the German navy if given the chance. The sole reason why Hipper had "got away" was the fact that Beatty had not been there to finish the job. Beatty was the incarnation of British fighting spirit—a man who could be relied on for victory.

CHAPTER X

STALEMATE

IT was the year 1915, and the war had become a savage test of endurance—the armies were entrenched on fronts hundreds of miles long. It was the year of gas warfare, the first gas-masks and steel helmets, the development of aerial combat, plans for the first tank. New words came into the vocabularies of nations—barrage, *minenwerfer*, shell-shock, Blighty, Hun . . . “Old Bill” was a British national character, and everyone spoke anxiously of Flanders . . . war no longer meant cavalry charges and Napoleonic manœuvring, but the annihilation of masses of men by explosive flung from the invisible distance—the enemy was a great hated mystery, rarely seen, source of death, violence and attack.

Nineteen-fifteen was the year in which the British Grand Fleet grew strong. Scapa was a great fortified base, transformed from its first vulnerability. Mine-fields protected it, and nets of stout steel were spread across the entrances—the gates opened and closed as the fleet came and went. In this harbour the crews, having coaled their ships and taken in supplies, could rest in a security equal to that of German Wilhelmshaven. The northern life hardened the men, accustomed them to hardship—they lived in an isolated, elemental world, beaten by winter weather and storms. Again and again Jellicoe took the fleet into the North Sea, drilling the ships tirelessly in battle evolutions, cruising in long “sweeps” without sighting trace of the Germans. Work at the guns was continual.

By a process of invisible transmutation Britain's Grand Fleet had become a war fleet, forged by its admiral into a great instrument of battle. Its first harried days seemed, now, like

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a bad dream. Nineteen-fifteen taught the ships to shoot; and continual experience in fleet movements through stormy waters, dark nights and narrow straits, gave them an incomparable seamanship. The fleet's numbers multiplied—the nineteen dreadnoughts became twenty-five, twenty-seven. Others were in preparation.

In the open sea to the north the blockade line continued its work—the first blockading vessels had been worn out in the arduous duty and replaced with others.

With his growing strength Jellicoe's strategy became more and more aggressive. The fleet was filled with a restless yearning to meet the enemy. Twice Hipper had got away. Let him come before the British guns a third time—and this time let the German battleships appear as well!

But the enemy remained behind impregnable defences. Nineteen-fifteen was not the year of the fleets. It was the year in which both armies, German and British, embarked upon colossal abortive ventures, while the fleets remained at stalemate.

In Germany, the desire for naval combat had surged up as strong as ever, despite the Emperor's fleet policy.

The original guerrilla warfare with submarines and minelayers had had disappointing results. True, on the first day of 1915 the old British battleship *Formidable* had been successfully torpedoed by the submarine *U-24*, but opportunities were rarer and rarer owing to the successful anti-submarine measures which Jellicoe had inaugurated.

The submarines, however, brought back reports that the enemy's mercantile trade offered excellent targets for attack, and it was to the idea of submarine warfare on commerce that von Pohl turned, thinking to use the U-boats as answer for the longing to do stupendous deeds—to deal the naval blow that would win the war. On the day of victory von Pohl would present the capital ships of the High Sea Fleet for royal review—no ships missing from the line, no scratch on their immaculate paint. Withholding the dreadnoughts from

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combat, he would create a war fleet of submarines to throttle the enemy.

Under Admiral von Pohl the High Sea Fleet endured twelve months of discouraging, harbour-bound monotony—a routine so dispiriting, in this year when all Germany was in the field, that the fine, high *élan* of the ships was dulled into leaden resignation, and something of their inner belief in victory against all odds was lost. Only two major units were added to the fleet's numbers. The squadrons alternated, week in, week out, in duty that was always the same—one week at anchor in Schillig Road, one week on patrol behind the offshore mine-fields, one week at Wilhelmshaven, where the crews walked the town's colourless streets, sat in its beer-saloons and explored its few houses of pleasure.

During the year a group of the fleet's younger officers, awarded the Iron Cross for their services, refused the decoration, saying no one so inactive was entitled to it. The Emperor reprimanded them sharply, and ordered them to accept the honour without criticism of the Fleet Command—the Emperor alone was the judge of his naval strategy's merits.

The submarine attack on commerce was conceived as a form of counter-blockade upon the British Isles. On February 4, 1915, the German Government published a notice to the world declaring "the waters around Great Britain and Ireland a military area." Any merchant ship found within those waters would be liable to destruction "without regard for the safety of those on board."

The campaign was begun with twenty-seven submarines, of which seven or eight could be kept on station at one time. A building programme was under way which would increase this number to ninety-five by the end of the year. And Britain had no effective means of checking submarine activity against merchant ships.

But this first attempt to use the U-boats as a blockading weapon against Britain was mismanaged and badly conceived, and, instead of bringing Germany any advantage recoiled upon her

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own head. It dragged on for months, involving her in continual disputes with the neutral Powers, notably with America. It ruined her prestige abroad and antagonized hundreds of thousands of American, Dutch, Danish and Scandinavian citizens who had been sympathetic to her. The campaign's greatest blunder was the torpedoing of the passenger-liner *Lusitania* on May 7, 1915, with a loss of 1,134 lives, including 114 Americans. It seemed impossible for the German command to realize that the killing of women and children destroyed the last vestige of Germany's reputation for humanity and civilization, and caused men by the thousand to spring to arms in the enemy cause. The military value of the sinking of the *Lusitania* was trifling compared to the hostile sentiment it aroused—Germany was sowing dragons' teeth, and the self-sacrificial efforts of her submarine service in the attempt to carry out the vacillating and contradictory orders of the High Command were futile. The 1915 submarine campaign was finally abandoned for political reasons—the first great German defeat of the war.

During the year there were no operations of any magnitude against the Grand Fleet, though a number of new mine-laying submarines were sent to lay mines off the British naval harbours. Mine-fields proved more effective against men-of-war than the torpedo, whose track through the water gave warning of its approach. But Jellicoe, after damage to several vessels, adopted the practice of sweeping the harbour entrances before any ship moved in or out of port. This added greatly to the complexity of fleet operations, but stopped the mine damage.

And three or four German commerce-raiders, disguised as merchant craft, slipped to sea and ran the British blockade. Their extraordinary cruises symbolized the aspirations of the fleet at home—the tiny *Moewe*, on her first voyage, sank and captured fifteen Allied vessels in less than three months, and laid mines which cost Britain a battleship.

Britain, too, had her great and futile naval venture in 1915—as futile as the German submarine campaign; she paid for it in

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blood and misery rather than in loss of prestige. It was a result of that persistent over-confidence which clouded the vision of so many people at her Admiralty. In it, she suffered a repulse which shook her as did no enemy attack that year.

Napoleon had once said: "Constantinople! Priceless key! In herself she is worth an Empire. Whoever possesses her will govern the world!" The Admiralty had decided that it would be fairly simple to storm the fortified Dardanelles with a naval force comprising a number of Britain's older men-of-war aided by a few of her best vessels—to take Constantinople, deal a mortal blow to Turkey, and open up the Black Sea for communication with Russia.

Like the German submarine venture, the Dardanelles campaign was characterized by "indecision and incoherence from the outset." In vain Jellicoe resisted the Admiralty's inroads upon his margin of numerical strength in the North Sea. In vain Lord Fisher, the First Sea Lord, who shared Jellicoe's appreciation of the enemy, insisted as Nelson had before him, that "ships should never fight a fort"—wrote to Churchill: "Damn the Dardanelles! They will be our gravel" Churchill, the First Lord, persisted in his decision and overrode all objections.

The naval attack was a complete failure. The old battleships *Queen*, *Irresistible*, *Triumph* and *Majestic* and various other men-of-war of the attacking force were sunk by the Turko-German defences; many others were badly damaged by gunfire and mines.

A second attack, jointly organized by the navy and the army, was badly planned, poorly prepared—and its consequences were even more tragic. Britain was forced to admit total defeat and abandon the few positions which her men had won at fearful cost. The blood-stained beaches of Gallipoli, the ship-strewn bottom of the Ægean Sea, became the monuments of a gigantic British failure, the tragedy of the Dardanelles.

Fisher had been preparing an aggressive plan by which the Grand Fleet was to enter the Baltic and assault the coast of

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German Pomerania, to make a breach which would set Russian troops to marching upon Berlin from the north-east. His proposal vetoed, his objections to the Dardanelles operation overridden, he resigned his office on May 15, 1915—an aged, broken-hearted Titan.

The end of 1915 found the North Sea a desolate ocean, deserted save for an occasional lonely, speeding man-of-war, an occasional Scandinavian tramp which risked the submarine menace to make fat profits for her owners; an occasional submarine, running warily on the surface to charge batteries. There were sharp clashes between bands of enemy destroyers off the Flanders coast, and then, for three or four days, the northern half of the North Sea would witness a great spectacular pageant as Jellicoe stood out on one of his periodical, tireless sweeps—ventures in which the British seamen waited in vain for the sight of a foe.

The long year ended as it had begun, with the destruction of a fine British man-of-war, the cruiser *Natal*, which blew up at her anchorage in Cromarty Firth after an internal explosion.

It seemed that the North Sea stalemate would continue indefinitely. No power under heaven could bring the fleets together as long as the High Sea Fleet was kept in its bases. Only a simultaneous advance, each side convinced that it had something to gain by a fleet action, would cause the battle-lines to join—and that seemed too unlikely, now, to be reckoned with. Britain, fully conscious of the Grand Fleet's strength, had almost ceased to expect it; Germany, grown accustomed to fleet inactivity, had sunk into naval inertia.

PART II
BATTLE

CHAPTER XI

SCHEER

NINETEEN-SIXTEEN was to be the year in which two bloody words, Verdun and Jutland, became graven into the record of mankind, to stand beside those other bloody words, Trafalgar, Waterloo, Salamis—tragic imprints of a savage, unending history of fighting.

Jutland, battle of the fleets, came to pass after men had given it up as impossible—a meeting in all force and panoply, two hundred and fifty ships in contest for the sea's mastery. It was the High Sea Fleet's great naval endeavour, and it called forth the Grand Fleet's great reply.

Early in 1916 the deadlock in the North Sea was broken by the addition of one small quantity to the great forces which had found stable equilibrium. One man, small among the tens of thousands of men who made up the fleets, became the agent to turn passive opposition into elemental conflict.

In January, 1916, Admiral von Pohl retired as Commander-in-Chief of the High Sea Fleet. He had been suffering from long illness, and now, despite a struggle to perform his duty, entered the last days of his life and hauled down his flag. Within a month he was dead.

The new commander of the fleet was Vice-Admiral Scheer, who had begun the war as leader of the unimportant squadron of pre-dreadnoughts. His appointment seemed, in Britain, evidence that the German fleet was no longer considered a striking weapon.

But immediately after the change of command, the German navy came to life in a sweeping offensive, which began on a broad scale and grew in intensity.

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In February, 1916, a second German submarine campaign was proclaimed, and Britain found herself faced with the greatest threat yet directed at her lines of supply, for she knew that Germany had built many new U-boats. The attack proposed to sink without warning any British ship encountered within the area about the British Isles. Britain, unprepared despite the experiences of the previous year, must create a new fleet of anti-submarine craft to counter the stroke, while her dread-noughts remained unengaged.

Then, simultaneously and unexpectedly, the High Sea Fleet came out of its harbours and moved into the North Sea. It was the first true fleet movement Germany had ever made. It came without warning, in the middle of a profound "wireless silence." The Admiralty received no advance information—Jellicoe was not even aware that German capital ships were abroad until the enemy sally had all but been completed and the German admiral had turned home.

This offensive altered the entire complexion of naval affairs in the North Sea, and focused intense British interest on the new German Commander-in-Chief, who had done what his predecessors had avoided.

Vice-Admiral Reinhard Scheer was, like Rear-Admiral Hipper, a Bavarian—a schoolmaster's son, who had entered the navy at 16 without particular social or financial assets. He was now 53, and had made his way to the fleet's most important post. Intelligent and nimble-witted, ambitious, confident, with a strong gift of leadership, he was a brilliant tactician and an excellent strategist with an aggressive conception of the weapons at the modern admiral's command. He belonged to the modern age—his short, active figure had spent most of the last thirty years in association with turrets, torpedoes and the seamanship of steam. He had mobile features expressing firmness and determination combined with alertness and humour.

This was an enemy Britain could not afford to under-estimate. He translated love of country into energetic action, and in his

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person the "action" element of the German naval officers' corps at last attained control of the fleet. The admiral had been identified from the first with the group which desired to attack with every naval weapon available. Untried by gunfire, he was, nevertheless, the universal choice as the fleet's leader. In particular he was the fleet's man, enjoying loyal support and popularity among all ranks. The fleet was as glad to see him come as it was to witness von Pohl's departure.

When Scheer took over the command and moved into the Commander-in-Chief's quarters in the *Friedrich der Grosse*, the conviction was spreading among all branches of German arms that a simultaneous attack on every front was the only hope of winning the war. Scheer shared this belief, and approached the task before him from the basic premise that the navy was capable of the duty he would demand of it.

These were radical departures from the beliefs which had previously governed the German naval command. Scheer, in contrast to his predecessors, actually wished and believed in action with units of Britain's Grand Fleet.

"When I consider my entire navy," the admiral reasoned, "I am forced to the belief that it is equal to Britain's.

"First of all, I have the High Sea Fleet, which now numbers seventeen dreadnoughts, six pre-dreadnoughts, five battle-cruisers, and some seventy efficient cruisers and destroyers.

"These ships alone would not be enough, in view of the enemy's dreadnought strength. But I have nearly one hundred excellent submarines, completed during the last twelve months, and a number of Zeppelin airships for scouting purposes. When I consider my fleet as a whole, I cannot argue that I am weak. I am strong—stronger than the enemy.

"My strength, however, will do me no good unless I attack with all weapons simultaneously. If I begin a submarine campaign, and leave Britain's fleet unharried, she will simply detach cruisers and torpedo-craft to parry the underwater attack.

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Similarly, if I strike at her fleet without using my submarines, I shall find myself against superior numbers. These are the mistakes my predecessors have made.

"Only if I use, simultaneously, every naval weapon that I have, will the total of my offensive power be greater than Britain's resistance, and I shall win."

In its essentials this argument was thoroughly sound.

On February 23 the Emperor visited Wilhelmshaven.

The special train arrived in cold weather, its luxurious royal car drawn over the extension of track which led through frozen fields to the harbour town. There were formalities at the small railway station, and Wilhelm entered a motor-car which took him to the dockyard where the Fleet Flagship was moored to the quay. The roar of shops was the background of the visit—the rumble of forges and clatter of rivet-hammers, which had gone on for so many years and was indelibly associated with the rugged steel vessels of the High Sea Fleet.

In Scheer, Wilhelm found a man of promising capability. The Emperor had discovered that the generals and admirals who had advised him through these eighteen months of war had been, on the whole, failures. Time and again he had based his decisions upon their positive assurances, to be sorely disappointed by the results. There had been extraordinary effort, but the nation found itself no closer to military victory than it had been a year ago—indeed, it had never regained the favourable situation of the autumn of 1914. Wilhelm had lost some of his confidence—the vanity which had led him to believe that the war could be won without sacrificing the blood of his favourite Guard regiments, or exposing his ships to battle. The Guard regiments had long since been decimated—and now he could find no objection to Scheer's arguments that the High Sea Fleet must be taken to sea.

The personnel of the fleet could see the royal standard flying from *Friedrich der Grosse's* truck. It was a turning point

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in all their lives. Emperor and admiral, surrounded by their staffs, conferred in the ship's great cabin, the rise and fall of their voices determining the fates of many men.

For it was at this conference that Wilhelm definitely approved the admiral's plans for energetic, aggressive use of every naval weapon, above and below the surface, until victory had been achieved.

CHAPTER XII

THRUST AND COUNTER-THRUST

BETWEEN Scheer's decision to attack, and the late spring day when the fleets finally joined battle, there were three months of tense North Sea activity on both sides. Like two giants, feinting and sparring before combat, these enormous forces—the Grand Fleet and the High Sea Fleet—now grown bold, felt for grips in anticipation of the clash that must follow. Officers and men cared nothing for policy and less for grand strategy. They wanted one thing—to be taken to battle. They were tired of inactivity, tired of months of waiting. They asked only to be allowed to throw their strength into the scales, to fight for victory.

On both sides the great difference from the war's early naval operations was the use of entire fleets.

Not since the classic days of Mediterranean galleys had admirals put out to sea with such numbers of ships—and the primitive Mediterranean armadas had, after all, been nothing more than rowing boats within sight and hailing distance of each other.

Even in more recent days of sail, when there had been fleets of thirty and forty vessels, the ships had cruised within visual signal distance of one another, so that their admiral could wield them as one unit.

To-day, from the command bridges, Scheer and Jellicoe could see only a small part of the tremendous forces which they led. With each month of the war, fleet movements had grown more complex, staff work more difficult. Wireless had made it possible to send out scouting units, advance formations, fast wing groups to steam far over the horizon and yet remain part

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of the great whole. The administration of such far-flung forces required a colossal grasp on the part of the admirals, and an intricate command organization. The wireless and communication offices were alive with a continual flow of messages; groups of men sat day and night ciphering and deciphering reports, signals, inquiries, commands, replies, acknowledgments, always working under pressure—always hurrying. In the Flag Command stations the admirals' personal staffs received and digested all information, plotted the progress of each unit on charts showing the entire sea, plotted the position and course of the enemy as wireless reports came in from the scouts.

Scheer revealed his strategy—the “pattern” which marked all his fleet operations—on his first great movement, that of March 5, when he took the entire main body of his fleet deep into the North Sea. One hope underlay the movement and those that followed it—the hope that fortune would repeat the opportunity which von Ingenohl had thrown away on December 16, 1914, and allow the German fleet to crush a detached and weaker British force.

From the cruising main body the admiral sent out: (1) Zeppelins to drop bombs upon England; (2) battle-cruisers to make an offensive thrust south-westward towards the Flemish coast; (3) submarines to lie in ambush off the southern British naval bases and attack any British ships which came out; (4) flotillas of destroyers to sally north-westward and attempt to intercept Beatty and Jellicoe and deliver surprise torpedo attacks.

The operation employed over a hundred ships, each group having a different task, all acting as part of a single, complex scheme. Each group had orders not to avoid the enemy, but to engage him in a retreating, running fight, falling back upon the German main body—each group would support the others. If the plan worked perfectly, Britain's forces, coming out to answer the thrust, would first be heavily damaged by the outlying torpedo and light forces, and then delivered up to the main body of the High Sea Fleet.

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If luck were with him, the German admiral believed he might wrest mastery of the sea for himself in a single engagement. He hoped, in any case, to do considerable damage, particularly with torpedoes, at small cost to himself. And, whatever happened, he would try his strength and take the measure of his foe.

Despite all the elaborate preparations, the scheme proved ineffective because Scheer had overlooked one point in setting his traps—he had given the enemy no warning of his presence at sea. During his preliminary movements he had avoided the free use of wireless made by Ingenohl and Pohl, and the British Intelligence Service had failed to detect the German operation until too late to reply. But Scheer, if he comprehended lack of Intelligence as the real reason why no British ships had come out, did not realize that the next time he moved, Britain would be ready to interpret his scanty communication correctly—nor did he realize that he might use false wireless messages to decoy the enemy fleet to any portion of the sea he desired, since he was unaware of the extraordinary development of the British listening and decoding service, and the confidence with which his enemies based their movements upon wireless information. Scheer concluded, rather, that he could take the sea undetected at any time he chose, assume any position he desired—but then would have to use positive steps, such as bombarding an English coastal town, to force the sluggish British—for so he considered them—to sea.

News of German naval activity caused deep public feeling and anxiety in the British Isles. The submarine and Zeppelin operations led to demands for reprisal. Both weapons seemed despicable, striking at weakness and defencelessness, avoiding combat, taking refuge in darkness and invisibility. The British people cried for destruction of the opponent—wanted to learn from the morning newspapers that the Zeppelins had been destroyed, the submarines sunk, the High Sea Fleet met in action and utterly vanquished, never to threaten again. Britain's

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hopes and dreads, the desire for victory and the fear of defeat, rose in the demand that the Grand Fleet give evidence of its superiority.

In the face of public restlessness it was a time when the Admiralty and the Fleet Command must remain calm and deliberate, realizing how little this great mass voice knew of the facts, of the strength of the enemy, of the success of the Grand Fleet in holding the High Sea Fleet where it could do no damage to Britain. Yet never, before this war, had military commanders been placed under such public pressure, exposed to such publicity, had their activities so intently scrutinized by millions of newspaper readers, citizen strategists, non-combatant dare-devils—too many men, reacting to public desire, had already been led into rash operations, like that at the Dardanelles, vain attempts to satisfy the demand for spectacular victory.

Newspaper men came to Scapa Flow, provided with credentials and letters of introduction from influential quarters. Many of them had been writing on naval subjects for years, without possessing very great grasp of what modern naval warfare actually meant. They wished to reassure the public of the fleet's superiority, to publish hints of new weapons which would prove disconcerting to Germany as the submarine and Zeppelin were to Britain. Why, with his great force, did the British admiral not move upon German waters and crush the enemy fleet? Surely that was the goal of his operations? They objected to Jellicoe's unwillingness to discuss his plans, his refusal to allow them access to his ships, his refusal to quarter permanent war correspondents aboard his flagship *Iron Duke*. A certain amount of hostility grew between the Commander-in-Chief and the more prying, more outspokenly critical, members of the Press.

Scapa Flow, like Wilhelmshaven, was alive with plans, preparations for colossal operations which Jellicoe was intent on keeping secret. The new German naval policy, with its promise of battle, offered the opportunity for which the British admiral had been waiting, and he had instantly adopted an

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aggressive offensive strategy. His immediate object was to destroy the enemy's Zeppelins.

But not a word to the Press or public. How could the public understand, for example, that while humanly aroused, Jellicoe was not specifically interested in the Zeppelins because they possessed the power to bomb British soil, but deeply concerned with their ability to scout before the enemy's fleet? The latter function was a menace to Britain ten times greater than the former, for it threatened the success of the Grand Fleet's strategy. Could people visualize the dangerous fact that it was possible for German airship observers to send wireless information to flotillas of enemy submarines? That the airship gave the submarine a periscope of a hundred miles range? Could people realize that the airship and the submarine were weapons which would some day be beaten, but that for the present no effective counter-weapons had been devised? How could Jellicoe take the nation into his confidence when every word he uttered on the subject was information his enemies longed to possess? Silence was the answer—for himself and for the fleet. Yet to keep silence was to be prejudged and damned.

Zeppelins and submarines. Jellicoe was right in his knowledge that Scheer's strategy would revolve about the two—that the German commander considered them the weapons which would turn the scale in Germany's favour.

The Zeppelin hangars were at Hoyer and Tondern, in Schleswig-Holstein. There, if Jellicoe could reach them at their bases, he could destroy the airships. It was the only place he could be certain of locating and destroying them—yet it was immune from attack by sea, and impossible to reach with a landing party. And in 1916 Jellicoe possessed no aircraft capable of flying across the North Sea on a bombing raid.

On March 24 he went to sea for a great operation. At its tip, five seaplanes were being taken close to the German coast by a fast naval unit, to be launched into the air next morning on a short-range bombing expedition—objective, the Zeppelin hangars. Behind this surprise attack lay the Grand Fleet's

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supporting forces in greater and greater numbers, ready for battle. Perhaps they would meet the enemy before the affair was over.

But the fates had chosen March 25 for weather so stormy that British attackers and German defenders alike were scattered by the gale, and turned back to their harbours to seek refuge from the elements.

Day by day, out in the Atlantic, in the Channel and in the Irish Sea, the second German submarine campaign against commerce was achieving pronounced military results and taking a heavy toll of merchant ships. But it had encountered the political difficulties which had shattered von Pohl's campaign a year earlier. Repeated protests from the neutrals, notably those of the United States, had poured into Berlin, reawakening all the fears of the Government and the Army General Staff, and discouraging the Emperor. Head-quarters was most reluctant, now as a year ago, to add to the number of Germany's military enemies, and wished to avoid new declarations of war at all costs.

Wilhelm had been very sure of the campaign during his conference with Admiral Scheer, but soon began to blow cold and to doubt its wisdom. He became persuaded by his statesmen and generals to make concessions to the neutrals—the Government would soothe Washington by admitting Germany's liability to pay an indemnity for all American citizens killed by the submarine attacks, and promised to be more careful in choosing targets in the future. This was like a confession of guilt and drew immediate opposition from the fleet. The Emperor became, in effect, a buffer between the wishes of the outside world, including the enemy, and those of his own naval commanders, who pressed for greater ruthlessness—the complete destruction of all trade to or from Britain—as the only pathway to victory.

At head-quarters, Grand Admiral von Tirpitz was so stubborn in his opposition to compromise, that the atmosphere

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between him and the Emperor became very strained. Wilhelm found it impossible to endure the reproachful disapproval of the old bearded Titan—whose attitude was like that of a Prussian parent—and the Grand Admiral's forced resignation brought to an end a long career of devotion to the cause of German naval supremacy. Like Britain's Fisher, von Tirpitz had been thrust aside because he thought in naval terms in the greatest of all naval wars.

Within a week a public letter was briefly printed in a London newspaper, and as quickly vanished from its columns:

DEAR OLD TIRPS,

We are both in the same boat! What a time we've been colleagues, old boy! However, we did you in the eye over the Battle-Cruisers and I know you've said you'll never forgive me for it when bang went the *Blücher* and von Spee and all his host!

Cheer up, old chap! Say "Resurgam"! You're the one German sailor who understands War! Kill your enemy without being killed yourself. I don't blame you for the submarine business. I'd have done the same myself, only our idiots in England wouldn't believe it when I told 'em! Well! So long!

Yours till hell freezes,

FISHER.

With Tirpitz in retirement, Admiral von Capelle became German Secretary of State for the Navy, and Admiral Scheer was instructed to continue his submarine operations within the limits of modified instructions. He was still permitted to sink every British ship encountered within the war area, with the exception of passenger steamers. It was still to be a ruthless and effective campaign, and the German Command believed it would result in Britain's starvation.

From Scapa Flow and Wilhelmshaven the second group of colossal thrusts and parries was planned and carried out—April brought fair spring weather, of which the navies took advantage for almost ceaseless activity, seeking each other. And still they did not meet.

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On April 25, timed to coincide with the Sinn Fein rebellion which Germany had been helping to foment in Ireland, the most determined High Sea Fleet effort yet, found shells from Hipper's battle-cruisers crashing down upon the English coastal towns of Lowestoft and Yarmouth, German Zeppelins once more bombing English soil, and hundreds of British ships taking the sea to search for the attackers. There was sharp fighting at the coast, when the light forces from Harwich encountered the bombarding squadron. Out in the North Sea the battle-cruiser *Seydlitz* made her way home with heavy injuries after running upon a British mine. Scheer was abroad with the main body of the High Sea Fleet, seeking an opportunity to strike; Jellicoe was searching for him.

Each admiral had a general idea where the enemy lay. Yet there was an element of chance which made it possible for scouts to steam just beyond sight of each other—and once more the fleets were disappointed, failed to make contact with each other, and turned back towards their bases to take in coal and provisions.

CHAPTER XIII

FIFTH BATTLE SQUADRON

DURING the year 1915 a squadron of newly-completed battleships had joined the Grand Fleet. These ships embodied all the British doctrine of heavy striking power, were the most ruggedly armoured vessels the Royal Navy had ever built, and were capable of the high battleship speed of 25 knots. The cleverness with which their designers had achieved three factors—offence, defence, and mobility—within their hulls, approached the ideal of battleship construction.

There were five ships in the squadron, each mounting eight 15-inch guns, firing projectiles weighing 1,900 pounds—guns three inches larger in calibre than any German naval weapon. Their speed was three to four knots greater than the designed speed of any German battleship, and when driven to their utmost they could nearly equal the speed of the German battle-cruisers. They burned oil fuel, which permitted great steaming endurance without the exhausting labour of hand stoking. It was their arrival which had really lent decisiveness to the Grand Fleet's battle superiority.

In the fleet organization they were known as the Fifth Battle Squadron—*Queen Elizabeth*, *Warspite*, *Valiant*, *Barham* and *Malaya*—under the immediate command of Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas, who flew his flag in *Barham*.

Ordinarily they based at Scapa Flow, and Jellicoe employed them as the fast wing of the Grand Fleet's battle-line. But by a combination of circumstances they were detached after the German bombardment of Lowestoft and Yarmouth, and sent to base temporarily at Rosyth, to serve under Vice-Admiral Beatty as part of the force intended to counter Hipper's German

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battle-cruisers. At this time the *Queen Elizabeth*, which had had a year's hard duty, including service at the Dardanelles, went into the Rosyth dockyard for overhaul, so that the squadron was reduced to four ships.

Rosyth, Beatty's base in the River Forth, was the anchorage for ten battle-cruisers, divided into three squadrons commanded from the flagship *Lion*. The First Battle-Cruiser Squadron included *Princess Royal*, *Queen Mary* and *Tiger*, strongest of the ships. The Second Squadron was made up of *New Zealand*, *Indefatigable* and *Australia* (the latter temporarily absent for repairs after a collision with *New Zealand* on her last voyage to sea). The Third Squadron contained *Invincible*, *Inflexible* and *Indomitable*, oldest of their type, under Rear-Admiral the Honourable Horace L. A. Hood, descendant of the great Admiral Hood, British naval immortal of the French wars.

Hood was Beatty's second in command, universally admired, active since the beginning of the war, when he had led the dangerous bombardment of German positions on the Belgian coast with a group of monitors and old destroyers.

As conditions at Rosyth did not permit gunnery practice, it was the custom to send the battle-cruisers north to Scapa Flow a squadron at a time, to carry out their routine shoots on the admirable practice ranges which Jellicoe had developed.

Hood's Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron was scheduled to spend the latter part of May and the early part of June at Scapa Flow for this purpose. But in view of the active German operations, particularly Hipper's bombardments of the coast, Admiral Jellicoe felt it unwise to detach these ships unless some powerful unit were sent to Beatty's Battle-Cruiser Fleet as a replacement. Hence his orders to Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas to take the Fifth Battle Squadron to Rosyth and act under Beatty until further notice. As the Fifth Battle Squadron arrived, Hood departed for the north—the two units exchanged places and duties in the fleet organization.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SUNDERLAND PLAN

SINCE March 24 an exchange of notes had taken place between Berlin and Washington, following the torpedoing of the French passenger steamer *Sussex*, near Boulogne, by the submarine *UB-89*. Several American citizens had been injured in the episode and, failing to receive satisfaction, the United States Government finally threatened to break off diplomatic relations with Germany unless the Imperial Government made "effective renunciation of its present methods of submarine warfare against passenger and cargo ships."

After several days' hesitation, the German Government succumbed. Scheer, on his way home to Wilhelmshaven from his fleet operation of April 24-25, received wireless orders from the Chief of the Naval Staff, notifying him that the submarine campaign must henceforward be conducted under the rules for "prize warfare"—i.e. before an enemy or neutral merchant vessel could be torpedoed, she must be stopped and searched, and the presence of contraband in her cargo definitely established. For the second time the Government had refused to face war with America.

The admiral decided to voice the most emphatic protest he could by ordering the submarines of the High Sea Fleet to cease commerce-warfare altogether. He was bitterly disappointed. Perhaps, by abandoning the campaign, he could shock Berlin into realizing that the capital had tossed away the most vital feature of his broad naval offensive. He had no faith whatever in the U-boat for "prize warfare"—nothing would come of that but losses and the crippling of flotillas too valuable to throw away in surface gun-fights. To accept these conditions

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was to play straight into to Britain's hand—and he felt that Washington was only Machiavellian Britain's voice. No, he must do everything possible to persuade, even to force, his Government to change its views.

But that would take time, and time was precious. The war must go on, hammer and tongs. What was the next step to take in a military direction?

The large number of High Sea Fleet submarines suddenly released from commerce warfare and made available for fleet operations opened possibilities of new and decisive tactics, the evolution of his strategy into its full flower. Scheer had always believed in the torpedo trap—the trap that would cut down the enemy's numbers before battle was joined. Then the High Sea Fleet might fall upon a weakened Britain and go on to otherwise impossible victory. In one form or another this had been the goal of all German naval strategy since the beginning of the war; Scheer merely lumped the process into single co-ordinated operations, aggressively led, and dreamed of tangible results.

Lack of submarines had so far forced him to employ destroyers for the greater part of his torpedo ambushes, a practice open to many objections. Now, with numerous submarines at hand, he envisioned a great combined submarine and fleet operation on a scale never undertaken before.

If he used large numbers of submarines and the High Sea Fleet together to destroy the enemy fleet in action, or in a series of actions, he might, first, penetrate the British blockade; second, establish a counter-blockade of the British Isles with surface ships; third, attack the English coast with impunity—in short, win the war against Britain, and almost certainly against the Allies, to say nothing of the prestige his success would achieve for Germany in the eyes of the neutral world.

It was the old yearning for a triumphant High Sea Fleet as the fundamental of German sea-power, brought emphatically to the fore because for the moment it was the only naval pathway available.

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It depended entirely upon what success the submarines could achieve in 1916 against men-of-war as targets, and on the advantage Scheer might gain by the use of his Zeppelin scouts. Scheer knew Jellicoe's battle-line had been numerically strengthened by some fifty per cent., while the High Sea Fleet had been increased by only two capital ships during the past twelve months—the battle-cruiser *Lützow*, Hipper's flagship (a sister to the *Derfflinger*), and the battleship *Kronprinz*, attached to Squadron III.

Scheer's tactics must rise and fall upon the damage he was able to do to the enemy line before the fleets joined action. It was possible that if he met the enemy with, say, twenty German against thirty British dreadnoughts, he would be superior—he would not exclude the possibility until he had tried it. But it was not probable. Not a certainty by any manner of means. He must try to cut the enemy down to fit the German pattern.

He had used small submarine ambushes before and they had failed. He would use them now on a new and bigger scale. His basic plan would include submarine and mine traps before the enemy bases; the High Sea Fleet sent to sea as a lure; Zeppelin-scouting to warn of the approach of enemy forces, so that the German ships could escape any action dangerous to themselves; the battle-cruisers used for a demonstration that would prod the British to sea. As his most tangible objective, Scheer would concentrate upon Beatty, whose squadrons he considered the most vulnerable in the enemy fleet, while experience had shown Beatty to be the enemy admiral who exposed himself most rashly.

Jellicoe had likewise prepared for further operations, and his strategy was equally complex and interesting. He wished to demonstrate sea-power, to give visible evidence of his control of the North Sea, and to thwart the rising, venturesome tide of German naval operations. The one way he could do this was by bringing the enemy fleet to battle on British—and not on German—terms. He rightly assumed that the enemy was

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not seeking battle against the full dreadnought strength of the Grand Fleet. He therefore proposed to trap the enemy into action against this full strength, by taking advantage of the well-known German desire to cut out and destroy a detached British unit; once he had joined action, he proposed to employ tactics that would nullify the German superiority in certain special weapons, notably the torpedo.

The fundamental of Jellicoe's strategy was the long established British principle of placing the fleet where the enemy did not want it—the principle which had guided British naval operations, in war and peace, from time immemorial. Jellicoe desired a fleet battle—because the enemy did not desire a fleet battle. His mind was made up in advance that during battle he would keep the fleet out of waters which might be occupied by a flight of enemy torpedoes—because the enemy desired the fleet to be in those waters. He would avoid following any precipitate enemy retreat—because he believed the enemy would retreat to draw him into mine or submarine traps. He would refuse a general action by night, because his Intelligence Service had informed him that the enemy had made special, detailed preparations for a night action, and would probably seek battle by night in circumstances when day battle would be avoided—there was no point in gratifying this enemy wish. From first to last Jellicoe would do what he had done since the beginning of the war—place his fleet where the enemy neither wanted nor expected to find it, and let Germany beat herself to pieces against its implacable opposition. A hundred years ago a defeated Napoleon had said: "Wherever there is water to float a ship, we are sure to find you in our way," and the principles of British strategy had not changed since that time.

Jellicoe planned to have a squadron of British battleships, accompanied by eight light cruisers, appear off Skagen, most northerly point of Denmark, at dawn on June 2, and advance boldly into the Cattegat. This was the primary lure, a bait dangled before the Germans. The ships were meant to be seen from shore, so that German agents would communicate news of

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their presence to Scheer—Scheer was almost certain to send forces to cut them off.

In anticipation of this movement the Grand Fleet was to take station off the Jutland coast of Denmark, north-west of Horns Reef. The seaplane-carrier *Engadine* was to advance towards Horns Reef lightship, and her seaplanes were to attack and shoot down any German Zeppelins sighted, to prevent Scheer from receiving news of the Grand Fleet's presence. A mine-field was to be laid off the Vyl lightship as a trap, in case the Germans did not advance far enough to meet the British main body. British submarines were to lie in ambush northward of the new mine-field. Fleet action, on Jellicoe's terms, between the entire Grand Fleet and the entire High Sea Fleet, was the object.

While Jellicoe's plan was being prepared, Scheer's plan was encountering difficulties.

Seventeen German submarines had been sent to sea to take up ambush stations. This was the greatest number of U-boats which had ever been used in a single German naval operation, and represented virtually the entire submarine strength ready for sea at the time.

Ten boats had been ordered to spend the period between May 17 and May 23 lying in the area where the Grand Fleet usually cruised when moving towards operations in Heligoland Bight. Then, on the 23rd, two of them were to proceed to Scapa Flow, seven to the Firth of Forth (note the greater concentration on Beatty), and one to the Scottish coast, where they were to attack British ships leaving or entering harbour, and to furnish Scheer with wireless information as to Jellicoe's and Beatty's movements.

Meantime, three mine-laying submarines were to lay mines, respectively in the Firth of Forth (Beatty), the Moray Firth (one squadron of British battleships was based at Cromarty), and to westward of the Orkney Islands (Scheer had discovered, through the deciphering of a British wireless dispatch, that the passage west of the Orkneys was reported free from mines).

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Still another submarine was to go right inside the Firth of Forth (Beatty again) and lie in wait within the entrance; two were to advance towards Outer Dowsing, and two towards Terschelling.

The fleet operation was scheduled to begin on May 17, when Hipper would steam west with his battle-cruisers and bombard the town of Sunderland—the stroke expected to bring Beatty and Jellicoe out into the submarine waters. Meantime, Zeppelins were to reconnoitre across the North Sea from the Skagerrak to the Firth of Forth, and along the English coast as far south as the English Channel, and Scheer was to advance with the High Sea Fleet, ready to strike at any point where British weakness developed.

But engine-room difficulties in Squadron III led to a postponement from May 17 to May 23, and on the latter date a second postponement became necessary when the Wilhelmshaven dockyard reported that repairs to *Seydlitz* (mined during the last raid) would not be completed for another week. Scheer set May 30 or 31 as the outside date possible, as the submarines must come home shortly after that.

A period of misty, foggy weather set in. At the end of the week it developed that the prospects for Zeppelin scouting were very bad. This was the most serious obstacle yet, as the German admiral was unwilling to expose himself in the middle and western North Sea without an airship reconnaissance.

At the same time it seemed a pity to waste the exceptionally thorough submarine and mine ambushes. Scheer decided abruptly to change his plan. Unless the Zeppelins could scout he would move, not towards Sunderland, but northward towards the Skagerrak and the Norwegian coast. The purpose of his operation would be exactly the same—to decoy the Grand Fleet through the submarine traps and cut out a detached portion, preferably Beatty. He would accomplish it by an ostentatious sortie towards Norway, into relatively safe waters, rather than by bombarding an English town. In either case he should lure Beatty or Jellicoe—or both—to sea.

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On May 30 the commanding officer of the Zeppelins made a final report that long-range airship scouting to the west would be impossible during the next two days, though scouting to the north appeared more promising. Scheer at once issued orders for the Skagerrak-Norway enterprise. A code message was sent to the submarines to warn them of the event: "Expect enemy battlecraft to leave harbour on May 31 and June 1." It had been previously arranged that this message would indicate the inclusive dates of the High Sea Fleet operation.

The fleet was already assembling in the river anchorages, making preparations for sea.

CHAPTER XV

WARNING

THROUGHOUT the week the British Admiralty had been following the German wireless communications with unusual interest. Whitehall had listened to and recorded every German message, and turned them all over to the decoding section for translation.

The Intelligence Service had been amplified during the past few months by the erection of wireless direction-finders; it was possible, by means of these instruments, to detect exactly the point from which any German message was transmitted, whether at sea or ashore, so that Britain could trace the movements of any enemy vessel which used her wireless, whether surface craft, submarine or Zeppelin.

Espionage and wireless observation had already discovered the presence of Scheer's submarines in the North Sea, and the unusual activity of so many boats had led Britain to expect some important German operation, though its detailed nature could as yet only be surmised. Large patrols had been sent out to search for the submarines and try to run them down.

On the morning of May 30 it became evident to the Admiralty that the High Sea Fleet was assembling in the mouths of the German rivers. Scheer, believing his communications secure, was guardedly using wireless to order the preliminary concentration of his ships in the Elbe and Jade. He had intended at first not to include the Second Squadron—the six pre-dreadnoughts—in his operation. The old ships had no great fighting value against enemy dreadnoughts, and would be more valuable at home to guard the coast and the Heligoland

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Bight, particularly since their presence with the fleet would cut its speed to 18 knots—their maximum—to accommodate them. But the squadron commander had pressed to be taken along, and at the last moment Scheer had agreed, sympathizing with the spirit and desire for action in his former command. The wireless messages involved in this and similar decisions, and the reports of various units as they arrived at the outer anchorages, were sufficient to warn the British.

Shortly before noon, May 30, the Admiralty in London sent a message to Admiral Jellicoe, notifying him that the German fleet apparently intended to leave port the next morning, and that sixteen submarines had already left the German harbours, of which the majority were cruising in the North Sea.

Jellicoe, busy with the final details of his own June 2 plan, pushed the latter into the background, and made preparations to meet the German thrust. The Admiralty warning made him particularly conscious that enemy submarines were to co-operate in Scheer's activities in numbers never used before—a consciousness which was to dominate several of his own later decisions.

Shortly after 5.0 p.m., May 30, the British Admiralty intercepted a German operations signal—"31 *Mai Gg.* 2490"—transmitted to all units of the High Sea Fleet in such a manner that it was obviously of extreme importance.

In communicating with Jellicoe and Beatty, London avoided the German practice of using wireless, with the result that Britain's fundamental communications had remained concealed from the enemy. By land telegraph direct to the flagships at Scapa Flow and Rosyth, the British admirals were ordered at 5.40 to raise steam, proceed to sea and concentrate their forces about 100 miles east of Aberdeen to await further developments.

In the opinion of the Admiralty the German thrust would be directed at some point on the English coast. It seemed possible, however, that the English Channel was the objective, and to guard against a surprise at that point, Commodore

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Tyrwhitt, at Harwich, was ordered to hold himself in readiness there with steam up in all available light cruisers and destroyers of the Harwich Force; while the Third Battle Squadron of old pre-dreadnoughts, stationed at Sheerness, was told to cruise in a coastal-defence station off the Thames mouth. To complete the British defences, three submarines were ordered to go to sea at once and proceed to Horns Reef, to ambush the Germans if they appeared in that direction, and two more submarines were sent to cruise eastward of the Dogger Bank. These steps were taken to ward off the enemy stroke, wherever it fell.

At 9.30 p.m., May 30, 1916, three and a half hours before any German ship left port, the Grand Fleet took the sea in three great formations, a total of 151 ships bound for a common meeting-point, ordered to join each other on Wednesday, May 31.

Darkness and secrecy shrouded the British movement. Jellicoe's departure from Scapa Flow with the fleet's main body was accomplished with the usual smoothness of that complex event. At 5.40 p.m. the preliminary signal had been made: "All ships, excepting *Royal Sovereign* and *Menelaus*, prepare for sea."

At once a bustle of seamanly activity had begun. Stokers went below to raise steam, engines had been warmed up, boats hoisted in, decks cleared—all the varied routine of men-of-war making preparations for sea and battle. The mine-sweepers had gone out for a final sweep through the channel.

Two hours after the first signal, the fleet reported ready with steam up for eighteen knots. At 8.7 the flags made the second signal: "Fleet, with exception of *Royal Sovereign* and *Menelaus*, will leave harbour at 9.30 p.m. by the D.T.3 method."

As though co-operating to preserve the movement's secrecy, the day was drawing to a close. Beacons flashed on against the twilight, marking Hoxa Sound. At 9.30 the first unit of light craft began to steam out from the channel into the darkness, leaving security and safety behind. Clouds hid the stars; the air was heavy and wet; the islands were looming, mysterious,

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opaque masses. In succession—each ship lifting anchor at the proper minute, division after division, squadron after squadron of dreadnoughts and cruisers, flotilla after flotilla of destroyers—the Grand Fleet got under way, passing out to sea, entering the swift currents of the Pentland Firth and turning eastward into the open swell. The ships were darkened; each saw her neighbour only as a dark, indistinct silhouette against the night. The men on the bridges stood stolidly at their duties; the crews at guns and look-out stations were suddenly tense and sober at the return to danger and warfare. Inside the ships, in another world of bright electric light and intense heat, the turbines hummed with steady drone, and the stokers' shovels rasped as they fed coal into the boiler-fires.

Jellicoe led the fleet in the flagship *Iron Duke*, and took with him from Scapa the First and Fourth Battle Squadrons (16 dreadnought battleships); the Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron (3 dreadnought battle-cruisers) under Rear-Admiral Hood; the Second Cruiser Squadron (4 armoured cruisers) and the Fourth Light Cruiser Squadron (5 light cruisers); and the Fourth, Twelfth, and a division of the Eleventh, Destroyer Flotillas. The fleet was accompanied by the *Abdiel*, a fast small vessel specially fitted to lay mines.

From Cromarty Firth the Second Battle Squadron (8 dreadnought battleships under Rear-Admiral Jerram) got under way with various supporting units, chief of which was the First Cruiser Squadron—four armoured cruisers under Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Arbuthnot.

Jellicoe had sent a telegram to Jerram at 7.30: "As soon as you are ready, go to sea. . . . Join me to-morrow at 2.30 p.m., at 57°45' N., 4°15' E. Several enemy submarines reported in North Sea."

This completed the Grand Fleet's main body. The remainder of the fleet, under Vice-Admiral Beatty, was at Rosyth. At 5.45 p.m., immediately after receiving the Admiralty's instructions, Beatty had commanded his ships by flag signal:

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"Raise steam for 22 knots. Report when ready." Four minutes later the confirming order had arrived by telegraph from Jellicoe at Scapa: "Urgent. Raise steam."

At 8.15 Beatty had received his detailed instructions in a telegraphic dispatch from Jellicoe. "Reference Admiralty telegram 5.40 p.m.: All available ships of Battle-Cruiser Fleet, with Fifth Battle Squadron and destroyers, proceed to a point about $56^{\circ}40'$ N., $5^{\circ}0'$ E. Destroyers economize fuel. I assume you will arrive there to-morrow, Wednesday, May 31, at 2.0 p.m. Unless I am delayed by fog, my position at 2.0 will be about $57^{\circ}45'$ N., $4^{\circ}15'$ E. Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron, *Chester* and *Canterbury* will accompany me. If there is no further news by 2.0 p.m., steam towards me to get in visual touch. From $57^{\circ}45'$ N., $4^{\circ}15'$ E., I will steam towards Horns Reef. Acknowledge meeting point."

Beatty, acknowledging this message, stood out of the Firth of Forth to sea. With him were the First and Second Battle-Cruiser Squadrons (6 dreadnought battle-cruisers, including the flagship *Lion*), the Fifth Battle-Squadron (4 dreadnought battleships under Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas); the First, Second and Third Light Cruiser Squadrons (a total of 12 light cruisers), and 27 destroyers of the First, Ninth, Tenth and Thirteenth Flotillas under the light cruisers *Fearless* and *Champion*. Beatty's forces were accompanied by the seaplane-carrier *Engadine*, with seaplanes ready for flight.

In these three groups from Scapa Flow, Cromarty, and Rosyth, the total British Grand Fleet was composed of 28 dreadnought-battleships, 9 dreadnought battle-cruisers, 8 armoured cruisers, 26 light cruisers, 5 flotilla-leaders, 73 destroyers, 1 seaplane-carrier and 1 special minelayer—all told, 151 ships of war. Large and small, they carried more than 1,700 guns. By 10.30 p.m., May 30, 1916, they were all at sea, moving eastward towards a rendezvous about eighty miles off the Skagerrak.

CHAPTER XVI

THREAT

AN hour after midnight, May 31, in the pitch darkness of Wednesday morning, the German admiral took his fleet out of Schillig Road, totally unaware that the enemy had already sent forth a colossal expedition to meet him. If it had been Scheer's purpose to draw the British out into his submarine ambushes, he had accomplished that much before the first German anchor was lifted in the High Sea Fleet. He had no fear of being surprised—the submarines on watch, and the Zeppelins ordered to scout to the north, would protect him. The enemy fleet, he felt, could not possibly get to sea without its movement being detected and reported.

Hipper led the German advance, ordered to cruise some forty miles in front of the main body. Under his command were the five battle-cruisers, *Lützow* (flagship), *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke* and *Von der Tann*; the Second Scouting Group of four light cruisers, and the Second, Sixth and Ninth Destroyer Flotillas, totalling thirty destroyers, under the leadership of the light cruiser *Regensburg*. Hipper had forty ships.

Scheer followed. The Commander-in-Chief took to sea the Third Squadron of dreadnought battleships (7 ships); the Fleet Flagship *Friedrich der Grosse*; the First Squadron of dreadnought battleships (8 ships)—a total of 16 dreadnoughts. These were accompanied by the Fourth Scouting Group of old light cruisers, and by the First, Third, Fifth and Seventh Destroyer Flotillas, totalling 33 destroyers, under the leadership of the light cruiser *Rostock*.

In Heligoland Bight Scheer was joined by Squadron II of pre-dreadnought battleships (6 ships) from the Elbe. The

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total number of ships in Scheer's main body was 61, and the grand total of German ships under Scheer and Hipper was 101, carrying some 900 guns.

In the fleet there was a sense that the operation was one of unusual magnitude and importance. The presence of the old Squadron II made the crews feel that Germany was throwing every bit of strength she had into play. At the last moment the arrival of several thousand army gas-masks, served out to the most vital battle-stations, lent an air of unexpected danger to the venture—it was the first time the navy had prepared for the possibility of gas warfare.

As usual, the majority of the men had no idea of the ships' destination, and could only speculate over their presence at sea. They knew they were going forward—the use of the Horns Reef Channel through the mine-fields, the position of the sun when it rose upon a fair day, gave a general idea that the course was northerly. As long as the ships were headed away from Germany the crews were content—it meant a possibility of sighting the British, and every man in the German fleet desired contact with the enemy on that morning of May 31, 1916.

The officers had more knowledge. They knew the fleet was to go north, keeping about fifty miles off the Danish coast, to a rendezvous off the entrance to the Skagerrak, which would be reached in mid-afternoon. They gathered on the ships' bridges, talking together and looking away over the fleet and towards the western horizon. It was a great spectacle—the huge grey dreadnoughts ploughing along in column, bare and Spartan, surrounded by screens of slender light craft. Grey-black smoke went up from the funnels, forming a hazy cloud astern. The waters covered by the formation were like a bit of German territory taken to sea, protected by floating fortresses of steel, with which went Germany's resolution and her aspirations.

At 5.37 in the morning a message reached Scheer on the bridge of *Friedrich der Grosse*. One of his submarines had come to the surface three hundred miles away to report by

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wireless that she had sighted two British dreadnoughts, two cruisers, and several destroyers 60 miles east of the Firth of Forth, on a south-easterly course.

A few minutes later a message from a second submarine, *U-66*, came in, reporting eight British battleships, with various light cruisers and destroyers, 60 miles east of Peterhead, on a north-easterly course. At the same time the German wireless and decoding station at Neumünster reported that intercepted British wireless dispatches indicated that two British dreadnoughts, or groups of dreadnoughts, had left Scapa Flow.

Scapa Flow—Cromarty—Firth of Forth . . . the messages contained the clue to the entire British movement, but Scheer was unable to piece their scanty information into the full picture which they signified. He saw in them no indication that the entire Grand Fleet had left port—felt, rather, that only small, isolated units of British ships were abroad on routine affairs having no connexion with his own fleet movement. Jellicoe, he decided, was still at Scapa Flow.

Thus a mistaken belief in the secrecy of his own movement, coupled with failure to read his intelligence intuitively, completed the German admiral's deception. Apart from these bits of information the submarine ambushes had been utterly futile. Jellicoe and Beatty were coming to sea unattacked, unharmed, and undiscovered! Scheer, in basing German strategy upon an optimistic over-estimation of the submarine's powers, had ventured into a dangerous and experimental realm of hopes. He knew with mathematical certainty how much damage a given number of submarines could do to merchant shipping within a given period of time, but he had no data as to the number of boats needed for successful operations against the Grand Fleet, and he was now about to acquire experience in the hard school of reality. For war is the mathematics of violence, and woe betide him whose calculations are wrong.

The German admiral went on to the northward, passed through the German mine-fields, and emerged into the open North Sea in ignorance of the fact that, as the fleets were steam-

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ing, a freak of destiny would bring them into identical waters late in the afternoon.

Jellicoe's effective anti-submarine measures had been largely responsible for the failure of the German U-boats. The main body of the Grand Fleet had divided during the night hours to reduce the danger from underwater attack. Dawn had been misty, and as the ships became visible to each other they had increased speed and begun to steer zig-zag courses. The squadrons joined, taking up a great cruising formation, which was strengthened towards noon by the arrival of the forces from Cromarty.

The day took its course—a majestic maritime pageant. The ships were called to battle stations for drill, rehearsing the practices of naval gunnery for the thousandth time; the turrets turned together in simultaneous movements. It was a fine clear day, with a light swell on the surface of the sea, warm and pleasant. The morning mists evaporated and the visibility was good.

Occasionally there was the false alarm of a periscope sighted—the look-outs, searching their small sectors through binoculars, reported every bit of flotsam, every suspicious swirl of water. But the fleet, unaware that it had avoided this trap, had passed beyond the zone of German submarine ambush, and there were no submarines anywhere near the area into which it was steaming.

Jellicoe, with the main fleet, and Beatty, with the battle-cruisers, were moving eastward seventy miles apart, far out of sight of each other. Not until early afternoon would they turn towards one another, to join into one great formation. Beatty was the nearer to Germany; he should encounter signs of German operations long before Jellicoe.

But a conviction had grown in the minds of the British leaders that the German operation was not taking place. Though Jellicoe had been warned that the enemy was assembling in the river anchorages ready for sea, there had since been no

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sign whatever that the Germans had actually left harbour. Scheer had preserved strict wireless silence after getting under way.

Late in the morning information reached the British flagship which crystallized the belief that the High Sea Fleet was still at anchor. Jellicoe received a message from the Admiralty, notifying him that the radio-observation service definitely placed the German flagship *Friedrich der Grosse* at her berth in the River Jade at 11.0 a.m. If the enemy flagship had not sailed, it seemed reasonable to assume that the German main fleet had not sailed.

This report was the result of a simple German subterfuge—a subterfuge known at the Admiralty but not made known to Jellicoe owing to Departmental bungling. On putting to sea, Scheer's flagship had exchanged her wireless call-sign with that of the naval wireless station at No. 3 entrance to the Jade—the signals signed "*Friedrich der Grosse*," which the British continued to hear and locate in the German harbour through the morning, had nothing to do with the position of the High Sea Fleet or of its flagship.

Jellicoe, however, did not know this, and the message did not explain it to him; he simply had a flat statement from London, from a source ordinarily reliable, that *Friedrich der Grosse* was still in port. He assumed that the German operation was following the practice of many former German movements—that Hipper had put to sea alone to attack the English coast, while Scheer was staying behind and would only steam out to cover the German battle-cruisers' retreat.

Hence Jellicoe felt safe in maintaining a considerable distance between himself and Beatty. Let Beatty stay where he could swoop down upon the German raiders; the Commander-in-Chief would cover the northern exits from the North Sea, and stop any attempt to break through to the Tenth Cruiser Squadron and the blockade line.

British and Germans, alike ignorant of each others' presence abroad, had depended upon elaborate Intelligence services, which

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mutually convinced the commanders that their antagonists were hundreds of miles away, safe in harbour.

Noon passed, and one o'clock.

At 2.0 in the afternoon, Beatty approached the latitude and longitude assigned as his objective in Jellicoe's order. Nothing had been seen or heard of the enemy, although by this time the German advance had brought Hipper within fifty miles of the British Battle-Cruiser Fleet.

If Beatty carried out the turn to the north, to meet Jellicoe as ordered, there was a possibility that the British and German fleets would pass by each other without meeting, as they had passed so often before, and that the day would close without hostilities.

For still another unforeseen factor had been interjected into the complex of the situation. The five German Zeppelins which had been sent into the air for scouting purposes, had been delayed and had not yet reached their appointed stations, so that the German commander was advancing without this precious source of reconnaissance.

Fate seemed to have plotted the deception of all the combatant admirals. At 2.15 the die seemed finally cast, when Beatty, with a last look at the bare horizon, hoisted the signal which turned the Battle-Cruiser Fleet to the northward. He had crossed the entire breadth of the North Sea and reached a point ninety miles off the Skagerrak. The three squadrons of his heavy ships, now steaming towards Jellicoe—and away from the enemy—were each in column, in a V formation, each squadron surrounded by a destroyer screen. Twelve light cruisers and the seaplane-carrier *Engadine* had been formed into a screening line, to cover the rear from surprise during the movement north. The speed of the formation was 19 knots.

As Beatty turned, his flagship was exactly 45 miles west of Hipper's flagship *Lützow*, and the most extended tips of the British and German screens were only 16 miles apart, just out of sight over the horizon from each other.

CHAPTER XVII

N. J. FJORD

TOWARDS 2.0 p.m. it happened that the Danish tramp-steamer *N. J. Fjord* was not far north of that shallow part of the North Sea called the Jutland Bank, about seventy miles off the Skagerrak. Her engines were stopped; she rose and dipped lazily with the gentle roll of the sea. Her steam blowing off, shot skyward in a cotton-white jet which mixed with her funnel-smoke to spread into a listless cloud visible for miles against the leaden atmosphere. She had been sighted and signalled to "Heave to!" by the German light cruiser *Elbing*, from the extreme westerly flank of the scouting fan flung out by Hipper eight miles ahead of his battle-cruisers.

A motley crew hung over the rail of the Danish steamer, looking at the black, business-like German destroyers which *Elbing* had sent to investigate her, to discover whether the ship carried contraband in her hold—war materials, food, supplies for the enemy Allies . . . whether, indeed, she were a British scout in disguise. It was a familiar enough experience to these men of the *N. J. Fjord*. Time and again during the past two years their ship had been stopped on the high seas by German or British men-of-war, searched from truck to keel—allowed to proceed. Hundreds of *N. J. Fjord's* sisters in the merchant service had been less fortunate—been interned . . . been sent to the bottom by a torpedo. Difficult was the lot of any merchant vessel which navigated the war zone.

And "boarding and search" was familiar enough to the destroyers *B-109* and *B-110*. Blockade, starvation—the war would be won by cutting off food-stuffs and raw materials. Every merchant ship must be stopped and searched. The flag

N. J. FJORD

of a neutral, painted large on her rusty sides, was no guarantee of innocence. High were the profits of running the blockade, daring the merchant skippers, many the vessels and clever their disguises in the contraband traffic.

The destroyer look-outs, vigilant for traces of the enemy, scanned the horizon unceasingly. One of the slender craft went alongside the suspected merchantman; her companion lay off, alert, guns and torpedo-tubes manned. Officers and petty officers climbed up to the Danish ship's deck and demanded the ship's papers.

Suddenly a wig-wag signal was made from the destroyer on watch.

Smoke had been sighted on the horizon to the westward.

Ordering *N. J. Fjord* to "Stand by and await further orders," *B-110* recalled her boarding party, cast off and gathered headway west after *B-109*. Both German destroyers stood away at increasing speed, leaving behind an astonished merchant crew to discuss the event in Scandinavian gutturals.

Exactly fifteen minutes earlier, the British light cruiser *Galatea*, in company with the light cruiser *Phaton*, had been steaming towards her place at the extreme easterly wing of the screen which Beatty was flinging out to cover the northward movement of the Battle-Cruiser Fleet. As she reached her station *Galatea* had sighted the distant cloud of smoke and steam poured up by the hove-to *N. J. Fjord*—a small discoloration rising above the eastern horizon.

Increasing to full speed, both British ships had proceeded to investigate. Their curiosity became suspicion with the discovery that the smoke rose from a vessel which was apparently stopped—probable indication that an enemy submarine was at work.

Galatea and *Phaton* intended to rejoin their fleet formation as soon as they had completed their investigation. But at 2.20, charging down towards *N. J. Fjord's* smoke, they sighted not only the merchant ship, but two black specks putting away from her vicinity—specks which through the binoculars took on the

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silhouettes of German light cruisers—actually the German destroyers *B-109* and *B-110*.

Wirelessing "Urgent! Enemy in sight!" *Galatea* and *Phaeton* closed to the attack. Eight minutes later they had come within gun-range, and the rumbling sound of broadsides drifted across the sea as British shells went hurtling through the air to fall about *B-109* and *B-110*.

N. J. Fjord, eager to escape from these dangerous waters and the menace of gunfire, made off from the scene with all the power of her ancient engine. But she had become destined to live long in the annals of naval history.

She, whom fate had sent upon a journey, had been responsible for "contact" between outlying units of Beatty's and Hipper's forces, and the contact was to lead to the Battle of Jutland—to the slaughter of thousands of men, the destruction of material and ships, the struggle for sea-power, the waste of nations' wealth, the clash of fleets created for the very deadly rôle they were to play to-day. Thus, events trivial in themselves become milestones of history, and thus, on May 31, 1916, the chance presence of a small neutral steamer in a certain portion of the North Sea, set the mighty forces of war into motion.

Had *N. J. Fjord* not existed, it is probable that the fleets would still have encountered each other later—at all events, the next morning. But the factors under which the two navies fought would then have been different. The tactical situation, the light, the sea, the visibility, would not have been the same. And the details of the battle, if not its very outcome, would have been other than those which actually developed. It would not have been "Jutland."

CHAPTER XVIII

"ENEMY IN SIGHT!"

ELBING steamed at high speed to support the two German destroyers, which had been forced to turn and run under the weight of *Galatea* and *Phæton*'s superior metal. As *Elbing* hurried up, she notified Hipper and the High Sea Fleet of the presence of hostile vessels, and, in doing so, broke the "wireless silence" which the Germans had observed since leaving harbour. Her report was heard and her position plotted by the listening and wireless-compass stations on the British coast.

At the approach of the German light cruiser, *Galatea* and *Phæton* turned and made back towards their own forces, and *Elbing*, supported by her torpedo-craft, took up hot pursuit, crowding on speed to overhaul the British ships. When she was six and three-quarter miles distant the order was given, "Open fire!"

Elbing's 5·9-inch bow guns spoke, and a moment later a German shell struck *Galatea* under the bridge—good shooting and the first hit of the battle.

Galatea now altered course until she was steering north-westward. She would try to draw the enemy away from German waters, farther and farther into the arms of the British Battle-Cruiser Fleet—a manœuvre calculated to make it possible for *Galatea*'s supporting vessels to cut off the German retreat. For *Galatea* could now see, in the distance, the smoke of other German ships hurrying to the scene of hostilities. Perhaps there was a considerable German force at sea, and she could lure them all to destruction under Beatty's heavy guns.

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In both battle-cruiser forces the message "Enemy in sight!" had caused all ships to go to battle-stations, and there was a general wheel and scurry, an increase of speed and tension.

Neither commander had, as yet, any indication that the enemy was present in capital-ship strength. The belief was rather the opposite—that isolated raiding or scouting units had been surprised. Still, the "contact" demanded preparation for battle, in anticipation of all eventualities.

Signal searchlights flashed from ship to ship; bridge crews bent flags and pennants of coloured bunting to the halyards, ran the hoists to lofty yard-arms, then down again to be replaced with others. Messages shot through pneumatic tubes between bridges and wireless and coding offices. Through the German decks there was the long ruffle of drums, beating all hands to quarters, while the clear blare of British bugles sounded "Action stations." For three or four minutes each ship was alive with hurrying men—then the crews vanished into turret and gun-casemate, conning-tower and ammunition passage, and were "numbering-off" under the eyes of officers and petty officers. The ships grew curiously silent, their mess flats deserted, their water-tight doors and hatches tightly closed and dogged, their hospital parties laying out instruments, their gun-control telephones busy with the stoic reports: "Ready!"

The dispatches from *Galatea* and *Elbing* had been barren of details. Both Beatty and Hipper, dependent upon scouts for the early information which would decide their plans of action, wanted further news. How strong was this reported enemy? From what direction had he appeared, and what course was he steaming?

Hipper found himself without air reconnaissance, but Beatty had been provided with a substitute for the Zeppelin scout—an experimental aircraft-carrier, still in embryo form. Shortly after 2.30 he ordered the *Engadine*, former cross-channel steamer converted to this purpose, to send an observation plane aloft. Seaplane No. 8359—a two-seater "Short"—was hoisted out and took off from the water as the first heavier-than-air craft

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ever employed to scout in naval battle. Her pilot flew east towards the Germans, but found observation difficult because of the low-lying clouds. Presently his wireless-messages ceased altogether. A burst petrol-pipe had forced him down. He landed successfully and made his way back, taxi-ing on the surface to the mother-ship to be hoisted in.

The seaplane had added nothing of importance to Beatty's information.

Meantime, Hipper, with his ships cleared for action, had increased to full speed. His five giants—the battle-cruisers *Lützow* (flagship), *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke* and *Von der Tann*—with their eleven attendant destroyers scurrying about their bows like schools of dolphins, wheeled and charged to the westward towards the reported enemy. Hipper's entire command took up the new course—forty ships of Imperial Germany's naval force, the vanguard of the High Sea Fleet.

But Beatty had made a general signal from the flagship *Lion*, ordering that a course be set, not towards the reported enemy, but south-eastward, directly across the German line of retreat, to cut off the encountered ships from their bases and force the decisive meeting which it was believed the Germans would try to avoid. At the same time light cruisers were ordered to aid *Galatea* and *Phaton* in their running gun-fight with the heavier *Elbing*.

Thus Commodore Sinclair, in *Galatea*, had correctly divined what Beatty's tactics would be, and his manœuvre of drawing the German light craft north-westward, promised success—more, promised annihilation for the Germans if, as everyone believed, they were out in limited numbers. For the six battle-cruisers and four dreadnought-battleships with Beatty, would prove a formidable barrier between the German ships and a safe return to Wilhelmshaven and the Fatherland.

Still, with minute succeeding minute, neither commander knew the strength of his antagonist, and neither had reason to believe that forces still greater were at sea—that the entire High Sea Fleet and the entire Grand Fleet were cruising abroad.

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Funnel smoke from speeding scouts obscured the horizon, which had grown hazy. Details of enemy vessels were difficult to distinguish—it was impossible to say whether they were destroyers or light cruisers. None of the larger vessels had been sighted. Over thirty miles of sea still lay between the opponent battle-cruiser columns. The invisible antagonists jockeyed in preliminary struggle for position, and the sharp prows of their many ships cleaved the gentle swelling sea, lashing it with waves and wakes which rolled away across the water, stirring the surface to uneasy restlessness. What the North Sea wind had failed to stir this day, was being churned up by these men-of-war.

CHAPTER XIX

BATTLE-CRUISERS

DURING the disposition of his ships, the hasty flinging out of screen and manœuvre of heavy units, something had occurred which was to prove most costly to Admiral Beatty and to Britain.

The four battleships of the Fifth Battle Squadron—*Barham*, *Valiant*, *Warspite* and *Malaya*, under Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas—had been stationed five miles to the north-westward of the British battle-cruisers during Beatty's short run to the north. Slowest and most powerful of his ships, they had thus been in exactly the opposite direction to that from which an enemy might be expected to approach. The formation was the conventional disposition of ships of these classes, when cruising in enemy waters.

When, just after 2.30, *Lion* flew a general flag signal ordering the battle-cruiser fleet to steer south of east to counter the reported danger, the very nature of the formation meant that the slower Fifth Battle Squadron would be placed five miles astern of the battle-cruisers.

The signal flags, scarlet, deep blue, yellow and white, flung out into the twenty-two knot breeze . . . were lost to sight in the palls of grey-black funnel smoke . . . reappeared for an instant . . . became obscured once more. The background of dull grey sea and sky added to the difficulty of distinguishing the flags across the miles which separated the battleships from the battle-cruisers.

Lion passed the signal to *Princess Royal*, who relayed it to *Queen Mary*; she in turn passed it on to *Tiger*.

"Change course! Follow the *Lion*!"

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The signal hoist came streaming down. *Lion's* helm went over, and the ships astern turned after her in column.

The Second Battle-Cruiser Squadron—*New Zealand* and *Indefatigable*—received the message and likewise altered course.

Fourteen escorting destroyers leaned deep as their bows swung around, then righted themselves and were away in the new direction, cutting the sea's surface into ragged ribbons.

But the Fifth Battle Squadron? Minutes passed by, and still Evan-Thomas had not turned, but stood on to the northward, until the five-mile gap between *Barham* and *Lion* had become six miles, seven . . . eight——

It had been *Tiger's* duty to relay the signal to Admiral Evan-Thomas, and *Tiger* had failed to do so. Once more the British battle-cruisers' signal organization had failed at a critical moment.

Eight precious minutes passed before *Barham* began to turn in the direction *Lion* had taken. Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas had decided to follow Beatty's movements upon his own initiative—the signal had never been received.

Eight minutes is a short interval of time. In this instance it had sufficed to divide Beatty's forces at the very moment when they should have been most concentrated, closest together. The gap between Beatty's battle-cruisers and the dreadnought-battleships had increased to ten miles, far enough to prevent them from entering a common action. The British admiral's striking power had been cut in two.

There was only one way in which Beatty could re-concentrate his line and recover the Fifth Battle Squadron's great strength. These ships, though they were good for twenty-five knots, did not have the speed to overtake the present furious drive of his battle-cruisers. If he wished Evan-Thomas to close up, he would have to manœuvre or slow down the straining leaders.

But Beatty, obeying the impulse to rush into action, hurried on, leaving his battleships to make the best of their way after him.

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Three o'clock. It was an hour since *N. J. Fjord* had been sighted by the scouting forces of the two fleets . . . forty-five minutes since the scouting forces had sighted each other.

Only twenty-five miles separated the British and German battle-cruisers, and still they were unaware of each other's presence.

On both sides, light cruisers, separated from their support by many miles, continued towards the "contact" point, continued to wireless reports of enemy smoke on the horizon, and continued isolated gun-duels. Wireless operators strained to tune their instruments through a crackle of static and interference. Navigating and tactical officers bent over their charts with rule, dividers and pencil, seeking to establish, from the scanty reports, the position and course of the still uncertain and indeterminate foe.

The initial assumptions were not proving fact. From minute to minute the reports conveyed the impression of a situation of more and more importance—a situation still expressed in terms of "smoke on the horizon," but definitely increasing in magnitude. The enemy was not behaving like a tiny band of surprised raiders—rather with the confidence of strength.

At 3.0 fresh news came in.

The German light cruisers at last established good visual contact with *Galatea* and her consorts; sharp fighting was going on between these ships, and Hipper, who had been charging westward, took his larger vessels north towards the fight.

Meantime *Galatea*, though she had not yet seen Hipper's ships, had sighted the smoke of his approach, and reported it to Beatty as that of "seven heavy ships, apparently steaming north."

This gave Beatty the most definite information he had as yet received. He faced vessels worthy of his mettle. It was time to close on the enemy, to bring him to battle, whoever he was. The British commander ordered his battle-cruisers to an easterly course, and then around to the north-east, until, finally

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he was heading for the German unit at right angles to Hipper's present course.

There would still be time to resume the movement across the German line of retreat if circumstances seemed to warrant it. For the moment, a bold bid for action was in order.

Now it was only a matter of minutes until the antagonists sighted each other—and this finally happened at 3.15, when *New Zealand*, which had been thrown into the lead of Beatty's line, signalled that she had sighted a German battle-cruiser hull down, fifteen miles away.

New Zealand, gift ship from the Dominion to the Mother Country—her captain, in deference to sailor superstition, was wearing the Maori war-kilt presented to the ship a year before by a New Zealand native chieftain, with the solemn injunction that the commanding officer should wear it whenever battle was joined. . . . And of all the battle-cruisers here with Beatty, *New Zealand* was to be the only one to escape serious punishment.

Indefatigable, steaming behind *New Zealand*, relayed the welcome news.

And Beatty learned at last that he faced Hipper—that British and German battle-cruisers were about to carry on the duel begun at the Dogger Bank.

Four minutes later Hipper had likewise learned the situation, when *Seydlitz* sighted and identified two of Beatty's heavy ships.

The news spread through both forces like wildfire. To the Germans it meant a chance to redeem the loss of the *Blücher*. To the British, the possibility of completing the victory snatched from their hands sixteen months before. Forty thousand men, waiting at their stations at gun and torpedo-tube, boiler-door and engine, could feel the rush and hurry of the ships beneath them; the weapons and gear of battle were all about them, shell and powder, splinter-mats and first-aid kits. Decks had been stripped bare and wetted down, emergency repair equipment made ready; the first charge was in each gun.

None of these seamen would see a living antagonist. Most of them were in small steel compartments behind armour, caught

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in an intense excitement which lent everything an air of unreality. From captain to lowest stoker-rating, each man in each ship possessed a sublime confidence in his magnificent weapon of steel. His ship would show herself superior to all others. Death would not touch her—her shells would roar out and penetrate the armour of the enemy.

Only a few men, aloft, could see the panorama of developing conflict—the straining vessels, the ominous distant funnel smoke, the indistinct shapes which meant danger, causing the curious sensations of conflict in pit of stomach and along the spine.

Both admirals held their courses.

In a few minutes remaining, each must make momentous decisions. Each had been ordered to seek battle provided he was not obviously at the disadvantage. Bearings of the enemy were being taken, and the distance was being measured, so that target course and speed could be learned. Each admiral must strive for tactical position, hoping to gain the advantage. The forces had gradually worked up speed until the ships were making almost the utmost of which they were capable—the British 25 knots, the Germans 26. Hundreds of half-naked, grimy stokers and greasy engineers laboured deep within the hulls, playing their all-important rôles in the struggle for position.

At 3.30 the opposing flagships were 14 miles apart, and each admiral had arrived at his plan of action.

Beatty found the enemy to the north-east, steaming rapidly northward across the present British course. He decided to force the issue by cutting once more across Hipper's line of retreat. Should the German hold on to the northward, Beatty would gain such a position that his antagonist would be forced either to fight a way home, or to steam onward into Jellicoe's arms.

The British commander wheeled his ships east, drawing the battle-cruisers together into a compact formation in preparation for action; the squadrons were in column abreast, the First Squadron to the south, with the *Lion* on the south flank. But

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the dreadnought-battleships, which had been struggling to cut down the gap, were still eight miles astern.

Meantime Hipper, calm, smoking his inevitable cigar, was applying the strategy which governed his presence ahead of the German main fleet, and had decided to turn and withdraw towards Scheer, fighting as he went—if luck were with him, he would draw the British into the arms of the German High Sea Fleet. He and Scheer, between them, would destroy Beatty, the venturesome. Exactly such a situation had been the German dream from the beginning. Hipper assumed that the British force was stronger than his own, and that he would need Scheer for the decisive stroke. He faced an opponent with a greater number of ships, stronger in weight of metal, and with a greater gun-range. Until he reached Scheer, the defensive was his only course.

At 3.32, as he saw Beatty bear to the east, Hipper turned his flagship *Lützow* in a complete semicircle, to a course exactly the opposite of that which he had been steering. He was now moving south-east, and the remainder of his battle-cruisers followed him. All his scouting and screening forces received the command "south-east" and wheeled.

This manœuvre placed the German light craft far astern, and Hipper decided to slow down to allow them to regain their battle position in the van; he reduced his speed to 18 knots.

The actions of the two commanders had altered the entire tactical arrangement. A moment earlier they had been nearing each other with relative slowness, and the action had promised to sweep to the northward towards Jellicoe. Now Hipper was steaming southward, away from Jellicoe and towards Scheer, in such a way that the combined speed of the German forces would bring them thirty-five miles nearer in the next hour; while Beatty was charging across to the east as though to a predestined appointment, closing at express-train speed to do battle. It was Beatty who was forcing the issue. Within minutes the ships would be within gun-range of each other, nor could Hipper escape the conflict which the Briton demanded.

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Two factors, and two only, were to Hipper's immediate advantage, though neither he nor Beatty was aware of them. First, Beatty's dark grey ships were outlined against the western afternoon horizon with relative clarity, while the light grey German vessels remained indistinct and hazy against the duller eastern sky. This difference would have a marked effect upon gunnery.

Second, in numbers Hipper found himself with five battle-cruisers against Beatty's six. The numerical odds, as he had foreseen, were slightly in the Briton's favour.

Lützow, *Derfflinger*, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, *Von der Tann*, were pitted against *Lion*, *Princess Royal*, *Queen Mary*, *Tiger*, *New Zealand* and *Indefatigable*. In each line the newer and more powerful ships were towards the head, the older vessels to the rear.

But, as had been proved all through the war to date, a slight numerical superiority was no guarantee of superior British fighting power. The five German ships, thanks particularly to improvements made after Dogger Bank, were actually more powerful in fighting value than Beatty's six. In defensive construction the German vessels were far better, and in offensive power, though they had guns of smaller calibre, they had better instruments for range-finding and fire-control, better shells, and more thoroughly drilled and trained guns' crews.

Beatty was quite blind to this; Hipper less so. Battle would reveal it thoroughly. In both navies the battle-cruiser was still more or less an experimental weapon, and Britain and Germany had followed different theories in its development. The only point in which Beatty was clearly superior was mobility—speed.

Beatty's four dreadnought-battleships, *Barham*, *Valiant*, *Warspite* and *Malaya*, under Evan-Thomas, which would have made the odds decisively and overwhelmingly in Britain's favour—as Jellicoe had intended them to be—were over the horizon, too far away to take part in the opening of the fight. Beatty, who had been given ten vessels to pit against the

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German's five, had left his battleships astern for the sake of a few moments' time, and must be content to enter action with his battle-cruisers alone.

But Beatty had implicit confidence in his battle-cruisers. What had he to fear? He was six to five. He had the heavier guns. He felt he had demonstrated the superiority of his forces at the Dogger Bank. There was nothing to cause him to hesitate. He would annihilate the German——

At 3.40 the distance between the antagonists had been reduced to ten miles. Every minute brought them closer.

Hipper expected the enemy to open fire momentarily. They had come within gun-range. The effective range of the British heavy guns was superior to his own. The delay in the duel was to Germany's advantage.

But the Briton withheld his fire, charging down to close the range still more. Beatty's ships were coming in abreast; he had not yet formed his battle-line.

In both forces the opposing ships were now clearly recognizable. Men at range-finders and telescopes examined their opponents, calling out the figures of range and bearing. The turrets had been trained out towards the enemy, and the loaded guns elevated high into the air. The turret crews stood waiting for the first salvo in pre-battle tension, ready to leap to activity the instant the guns had been fired.

At last Beatty reached the point of action. Signal flags streamed aloft. The six British ships swung magnificently into battle-line on a southerly course roughly parallel but slightly converging that of the Germans.

Eight and a half miles apart, gun to gun, the ships were ready to exchange broadsides. Signals ordering the distribution of fire flew from the flagships.

Of Beatty's ships, the two leaders were to concentrate on a single German, *Lion* and *Princess Royal* engaging the German flagship *Lützow*. The other British battle-cruisers were to engage the enemy ship for ship.

Hipper, for the time being, would fire at the first four and

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at the rear British ship, leaving the fifth in line, *New Zealand*, unengaged.

And in the ultimate event, despite the British superiority in gun-range, it was the German who opened fire first. At 3.48 Hipper's broadsides burst forth as the command flags were hauled down. Not for another half-minute did Beatty's ships answer.

No need to spread the news that battle had begun. The men below in engine-room and stoke-hold, in magazine and coal bunker, heard the muffled thunder of the guns' concussion, felt the ships lurch into deep, heaving roll under the discharge of tons of explosive—these were the sounds of action.

The projectiles arched high into the air on their flight towards the enemy line. Half a minute later they began to fall into the sea; the sound of their flight was a rumbling, thunderous roll; as they fell, they sent up huge columns of water which rose a hundred feet into the air, mantling the great ships from view, obscuring the enemy in towering pillars of spray and foam. Tons of foamy water leaped up about the ships, and within their hulls the metal resounded as though struck with giant hammers.

The gun-layers had not yet found their marks. The British were shooting over, the Germans short. The officers at the "spotting" stations levelled binoculars at the splashes, seeking to estimate the error. Sensitive instruments measured the range, corrected the gun settings. The grimness of action settled over the ships, driving away the harrying nervous tension of the past half-hour. The turret guns reared up and belched out the second salvos, and the North Sea "no-man's land" was overhung with yellow powder smoke, a Hell of gunfire, smoke and noise.

This was the beginning of the greatest of all sea battles.

CHAPTER XX

THE RUN TO THE SOUTH

BATTLE is a plunge into violence, to death and destruction. Jutland was such an epic of passions and courage that the quality called heroism became uppermost in all the thousands of men on both sides. They fought in a mass eagerness, confident of victory. Theirs was the heroism of fresh troops—such men as these had not been seen in action for months.

At Jutland the dominant note was gallantry in the midst of high-explosive violence, cordite and lyddite, falling into steel with stunning, incredible concussion. Men who never saw the enemy were crushed and mangled to extinction, yet their comrades, wounded and unwounded, continued to fight, thrusting fear into the background and surviving the fearful shock to nervous systems and human organisms.

The rumbling sounds of impact and detonation increased to an uninterrupted roar. German shells were falling about and striking the British ships. This was the decisive factor of the battle's first hour. Germany hit at once. Hipper, running south before the antagonist he believed superior, found himself with a commanding advantage as soon as the guns began to shoot, and pressed it home to the utmost, like a wrestler who gains an unexpected strangle-lock in the first exchange of grips. And Beatty, fighting back from a position of great disadvantage, struggled to bring his weapons into play and grimly refused to concede mastery.

Three minutes after fire was opened, *Lion*, at the head of the British line, found herself surging forward through a sea torn and lashed by enemy shells which fell to both sides of her. The

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enemy had found the range and "straddled." It was *Lützow*, leader of the German column. The German salvos came in groups of four projectiles, closely bunched.

Then, with devastating force, two missiles struck the *Lion*, bursting with a tremendous crash of rent metal.

Beatty, steering into a course more closely parallel to that of the Germans, found the range only fourteen thousand yards—his instruments had told him it was much greater. The British gunners, labouring to get out their ranging salvos and find their targets, were firing far over the enemy; their sights and range-finders were shrouded by the dense curtains of water which sprang up before them.

Naval gunnery is an inexact art compared with the precise shooting of artillery on land. The guns were being fired at uncertain ranges, from rolling, heaving ships, and even though perfectly aimed, could secure only a small percentage of hits. Three hits from every hundred shots would be effective shooting. More than that would be superb. Only the shells which struck home damaged the enemy. The others were wasted, sacrificed to the laws of chance, and fell into the sea.

In the fourth minute *Moltke's* salvos found the *Tiger*. Then the German vessel took up rapid-fire, shooting at twenty second intervals, and struck her antagonist again and then twice more.

Immediately afterwards *Derfflinger* hit *Princess Royal*, delivering three blows in rapid succession. Before the concussion of the last died away, *Von der Tann* began striking *Indefatigable*, the rear British ship, with a series of terrific impacts.

This was superb gunnery—the gunnery of fresh, highly-trained ships firing as though at target practice. Four of the five German battle-cruisers had found their marks with a suddenness and accuracy that told of long artillery schooling, excellent equipment, and the freedom from any effective British reply. Under the assault the British line disappeared from view in smoke and spray. Four British ships suffered heavy casualties—their immaculate decks were violated by suffocating powder-gas, death, the flaming debris of destruction.

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Then Beatty's line emerged stubbornly, the turrets spitting metal. The British salvos still went far over the enemy, to fall into the sea a mile, two miles, even three miles beyond the German line, and leave the German gunners unmolested.

At the mastheads, British observers found their instruments shrouded by smoke. The wind was blowing smoke from the funnels and gun-muzzles across the British line. A flotilla of destroyers, left astern as Beatty formed for battle, drove forward across the field of view, masking the enemy. Nothing could have been more disadvantageous.

Worst of all, *Queen Mary* and *Tiger* had missed the signal for the distribution of fire, and were aiming upon the wrong targets, interfering with the gunnery of their neighbours. German *Derfflinger* was not being fired on at all. Flashes spat from her distant guns . . . twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five seconds later, with admirable precision, the shells struck about *Princess Royal*; the men aloft could see them coming, "as big as blue-bottles," arriving with a deafening, ear-splitting roar. Before they had fallen, the German guns had flashed out again.

It was seven long minutes before *Queen Mary*, third in the British line, secured the first British hit upon *Seydlitz*, her opposite number. Two salvos later she hit again—and then lost the target. The first of her shells crashed deep into the German ship's forecastle, turning the forward electrical switchboard room into a mass of battered wreckage. The second penetrated one of the waist turrets and exploded—not a man of the turret-crew survived the powder-fire which broke out, while the turret itself was out of action with ruined guns and flooded magazines.

Queen Mary was the only one of the six British ships to establish initial superiority over a German vessel, but in firing at *Seydlitz* she had taken up the wrong target.

In the eleventh minute of the duelling, *Lion* secured a hit upon *Lützow*.

These three hits—two by *Queen Mary* and one by *Lion*—were the sole damage Beatty's vessels were able to achieve during

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the first twenty-five minutes of the contest. The other four British ships secured no hits at all. This was impotence, critical at such a moment.

Beatty was steaming at twenty-six knots. He intended to use the tactics long planned for a fight of this kind. Believing, with sublime confidence, his enemy to be running for home as he had run at the Dogger Bank, the British admiral would forge ahead until he had gained a position upon Hipper's bow, when he would turn across, forcing the German to turn before him, until the British ships had secured a commanding grip upon the German van and cut off the retreat. Then he would bring the distant Fifth Battle Squadron into play for a decisive stroke.

Since 3.55 his course change had resulted in slightly opening the range—the two lines were now steering slightly diverging courses—but he was still so close to the German ships that he was within striking distance, not only of the German turrets, but of the secondary batteries of 5.9-inch guns, and Hipper brought these lighter weapons into use, attaining the maximum rate of fire possible by naval vessels. It was the Imperial Navy's supreme artillery effort.

Turret salvos of four guns followed one another each twenty seconds, with two salvos from the secondary batteries in the intervals. Nine salvos a minute left each ship. The sides of Hipper's battle-cruisers darted with flashes of flame; in the ships themselves the din was terrific, annihilating the senses. The gunners laboured without sense of time, bathed in sweat, performing the operations of loading and firing like automata. Puffing clouds of powder-smoke shot out, swirling aft and aloft; the grey vessels swept southward in the heat and fury of their own salvos. In the lee of the action the German light cruisers and destroyers watched their heavy sisters, fascinated by the sight. For the first time since 1914, hope, dulled by months of inactivity, rose high.

Under the German effort, Britain began to suffer seriously. A shell which struck *Lion* at 4.00, twelve minutes after gun-fire commenced, penetrated the roof of Q-turret, in the waist

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of the ship, and exploded, killing the loading crew. The breech-plug of a loaded gun jarred open, and the full charge of powder and shell slid back out of the gun-chamber and fell down into the turret-pit, where the powder was instantly ignited by flames from burning bodies and clothing.

The turret officer, Major Harvey of the Royal Marines, was in the silent cabinet at the rear of the casemate; both legs had been severed from his body by the explosion. The dying man realized that if the powder-fire spread down through the ammunition supply and reached the magazines, the ship was lost. Dragging himself to the voice-pipe, he summoned all his strength and gave the order: "Flood the magazines!" Next, still intent upon his duty, he sent his badly burned and wounded sergeant to report to Captain Chatfield and Admiral Beatty that the turret was out of action.

Then Major Harvey died, unconscious that his heroism had earned the Victoria Cross.

Saved by the flooding of the magazines, the ship steamed forward with flames bursting high out of the gaping hole in the turret's roof. Of the turret crew only three men escaped with their lives; those below had remained at their posts to the end.

A mile and a quarter astern, *Indefatigable*, rearmost of the British battle-cruisers, came under heavy fire from *Von der Tann* at two minutes past four.

She was seen to shudder under the impact of the blows. In the neighbouring ship, *New Zealand*, observers watched smoke pour out of her superstructure, as though she were on fire aft.

She was unable to follow the change of course which the British line was just making, as Beatty sheered away from the enemy for the second time. Her consorts veered to starboard in column, opening the range, but *Indefatigable* stood on until she was 500 yards on *New Zealand's* quarter, and those in the latter ship followed her progress anxiously.

Two more German shells struck her, one landing on her forecastle, one on the forward turret.

For about thirty seconds there was no sign of serious damage.

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Then, beginning from forward, she became one devastating explosion. Her magazines blew up. Sheets of orange flame shot out from her hull, disappearing in dense columns of smoke which merged into a massive swirling cloud, become blacker against the lightened rift in the sky. The rumble increased to a deafening roar, audible above all the tumult of battle, and the explosion threw debris, great and small, including a 50-foot picket-boat, spinning high into the air.

In this explosion a 19,000-ton battle-cruiser vanished, never to be seen again, taking with her 1,015 British officers and men. Only two of her crew escaped, and were picked up from the water, hours later, by the German destroyer *S-68*.

Von der Tann had fired 52 11-inch and 38 5.9-inch shell in the duel with *Indefatigable*, at ranges between 18,000 and 14,000 yards, and had completed the British ship's destruction in seventeen minutes. She had not been hit herself. Now she shifted her aim to *New Zealand*.

It had become five ships against five ships. Beatty had lost the margin of superiority with which he had entered the action.

In terms of gun-power, the balance had shifted still further in favour of the Germans. *Hipper* was firing from twenty-one turrets, while Beatty was temporarily reduced to fifteen.

Full between the fighting lines lay a large, square-rigged sailing vessel, like a ghost of yesterday, her sails all set to catch the least breath of air. She had been becalmed in the battle's path, and her Scandinavian crew gazed panic-stricken at the spectacle of *Indefatigable's* destruction and the men-of-war which swept past on either hand, belching salvos over her head.

News that one of the enemy had gone down swept through the German ships, telephoned from the mastsheads to the stations below decks, greeted with wild cheers. Few of the British crews were aware of the incident, and few learned of it until after the battle. Every man was bent on keeping the guns going; most of the gunners, and most of the officers, believed they were dealing far more damage than they were receiving.

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Now *Lützow* again secured *Lion's* range, and scored six hits in rapid succession, battering the British flagship, causing heavy casualties and fresh fires.

The two lines, which had been so close, had gradually drawn apart; Beatty's second veer away had opened the range to 20,000 yards, which was beyond the limits of effective shooting.

Almost as rapidly as the fleets had come to grips, they had separated, and at 4.10 fire slackened. The first trial of strength had lasted twenty-five short minutes.

Beatty, conscious that he had suffered, did not realize how little damage his return fire had done. He utilized the moment to signal to the flotilla-leader of his destroyers: "Attack the enemy with torpedoes." Since *Lion's* wireless had been shot away, the message was transmitted via *Princess Royal*, second ship in the line.

In answer to the command, the torpedo-craft began to work up speed, to draw ahead into attacking position in the van.

A little after 4.00 *Moltke*, fourth ship in the German column, had discharged four torpedoes from her underwater torpedo-tubes, aimed at the centre of the British line.

Whether these torpedoes ever crossed the considerable breadth of water is uncertain. They should have required more than twenty minutes for the run, but as early as 4.11 three torpedoes were reported sighted by as many British ships in quick succession, and the reports led Admiral Beatty to believe he was passing through a German submarine trap. It was the first of several instances during the battle, in which the leaders on both sides suspected active enemy submarine activity—after the battle each side reported in good faith that it had rammed and sunk a hostile submarine, although actually, there was no submarine belonging to either navy anywhere near the battle area.

Beatty concluded that the submarines were on his starboard hand, on the side away from Hipper's line, and turned sharply back toward the German battle-cruisers, choosing the latter as the lesser of two evils.

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Simultaneously Admiral Hipper, wishing to keep the enemy within range of his guns, was inclining the head of the German column towards the British and increasing speed to 23 knots.

As a result, the battle lines began to draw closer once more, and as the range decreased, the artillery duel recommenced.

But in the interval, sorely needed reinforcements had come to Beatty's aid. The Fifth Battle Squadron had been steaming at 24 knots after the battle-cruisers, drawn on by the sound of gunfire and the sight of battle ahead. The battleships were still nearly eight miles behind the *Lion*, but as the German line had up to now been making only 18-21 knots, Evan-Thomas had gradually crept up upon the enemy until at 4.05, after firing a few shots at German light cruisers in the rear of Hipper's ships, he was able to see the German heavy craft for the first time. At first he could distinguish only the two rear ships, *Von der Tann* and *Moltke*; at 4.06 he opened fire with his 15-inch guns upon the former at very long range. Shortly afterwards all four of the British battleships were shooting, *Barham* and *Valiant* concentrating together upon the *Moltke*, while *Warspite* and *Malaya* aimed at *Von der Tann*.

For a few minutes this fire was ineffective, due to the great range, the smoke obscuring the German line, and the smoke of British destroyers which steamed across before the British battleships, repeating the condition which had handicapped Beatty at first.

But very soon it became apparent that the gunnery of the Fifth Battle Squadron was of very high order—was, in fact, the gunnery of Jellicoe and Scapa Flow, meticulously schooled and trained with a thoroughness quite equal to that of the Germans. Beatty had received help of extraordinary value. After a few ranging salvos the 15-inch shell, whose weight was legendary to the High Sea Fleet, struck close to the rear of Hipper's line—Evan-Thomas's rapid and accurate salvos fell so near their targets that the latter's hulls "quivered and reverberated."

Almost immediately *Von der Tann* was struck near the stern by a shell from *Barham*. The impact of 1,900 pounds of metal

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shuddered through the German ship in tremendous convulsions; the shell beat through the armour under water, exploding and sending fragments of armour-plating through several decks; the steering gear was threatened, and 600 tons of water entered the hull before the damage could be localized.

At 4.16 *Moltke*, surrounded by the splashes of straddling salvos, was hit in the side. The shell exploded in a coal-bunker, beat through to the ammunition supply of a midship 5.9-inch gun, set fire to powder, killed a number of men and put the gun out of action.

The two German vessels began steering zig-zag courses to escape the deluge of metal, and the effectiveness of their fire was at once decreased.

Meantime Beatty's ships were finding the range and shooting better. They had broken through the first grip of German artillery superiority, and regardless of their wounds were fighting stoutly. At 4.17 *Queen Mary* secured another hit upon *Seydlitz*. Three minutes later *New Zealand* reached *Von der Tann* with a shell that put a turret out of action with jammed guns and flooded magazines. Almost immediately another shell crashed through *Von der Tann's* armoured battery-deck, aft, and penetrated the barbette of the after turret, reducing it to similar impotence. For the second time the steering-gear was threatened, but escaped injury.

The British shells struck with terrific impact, but in many cases broke up as they did so, spending their force upon the armour. Yet *Von der Tann* was enveloped in such a cloud of smoke from fires that broke out, that *New Zealand* shifted to *Moltke* as a better target. The latter, fired upon by four British ships, was hit twice, but struck back valiantly and scored a counter-stroke upon *Tiger*, while *Von der Tann*, despite her injuries, fought on and struck *New Zealand*.

The tide of battle wavered in the balance. Each side was taking and dealing punishment. But Hipper's leading battle-cruisers continued to shoot magnificently. At the head of the line it was an extraordinary struggle. The range had closed

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until it permitted murderous aim, and Germany's three latest and finest battle-cruisers were duelling ship for ship against their British equivalents.

Lion received another full salvo. The British flagship was shrouded in such clouds of smoke that she became lost to the German gunners. *Lützow*, the German leader, shifted to *Princess Royal*, the second British ship, and struck her at 4.26, while *Derfflinger* and *Seydlitz* fired together upon *Queen Mary*.

The range was 15,000 yards. At this distance *Derfflinger* and *Seydlitz* began hitting *Queen Mary* with full intensity.

Valiant *Queen Mary*. Of all Britain's ships she was one of the most gallant, known throughout the fleet for her spirit and personality. She had dealt more blows than any other of Beatty's battle-cruisers to-day; she had struck *Seydlitz* thrice, causing heavy damage, and so far had escaped with little injury to herself. Now famous *Derfflinger*, untouched by a British shell, had come into play against her.

At 4.25 a group of four shells, closely bunched, reached her, of which three struck into her hull. Of the next salvo, two more projectiles crashed in. These five hits were the end of a valiant man-of-war.

There were men within *Queen Mary*, in compartments deep within her hull, to whom isolation had been the battle; they felt the ship shudder as she fired, heard the distant turmoil of the shooting, knew that a great contest was waging, and that their part in it was to tend a pump, or to fill buckets with coal, to watch the bearings of a machine, or wait until the call went up for stretcher-bearers.

They were plunged into darkness as the ship's lights went out. There was the shock of a terrific explosion which threw them off their feet. The deck lurched—the magazines were blowing up. As they lay bruised and half stunned, they could feel everything toss convulsively high and higher, and then begin a plunge downward. Living men were carried down with the sinking ship, in compartments penetrated by water with gurgling, voracious tenacity. Twelve hundred and fifty-eight officers

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and men went to their deaths, annihilated in one extraordinary moment which spared only seventeen souls of the entire crew—seventeen who managed to reach the open deck and spring overboard before the ship blew up.

This second catastrophe was a spectacle so staggering that the few men who saw it from the neighbouring ships, found it almost impossible to grasp. The column of smoke and flame that towered out of the exploding vessel was a thousand feet high; there was a swift vision of collapsing masts, of a hull rent in two; with the utmost difficulty *Tiger* and *New Zealand* sheered out to avoid the wreck, saw hundreds of objects catapulting into the air, saw the stern of the vessel rear up out of the water before its final plunge, the propellers still turning over slowly, the name *Queen Mary* legible on the counter, and swirls of loose paper drifting up from some shattered ship's office like the fluttering of white-winged birds.

Then she vanished.

Once more the exultant cheers swept through the distant German ships. This was battle in the grand dramatic manner, with monstrous vessels blowing up before the guns of the Fatherland.

And all the time the din of regular salvos had been uninterrupted; the loading crews had continued to thrust in shell and powder, the stokers had shovelled coal into the roaring furnaces, and both fleets had steamed through the geysers of water become so familiar that they were like a part of the seascape.

Beatty had only four battle-cruisers left. With the loss of two ships, and heavy casualties to the remainder, he had only half his original battle-cruiser fighting strength. He faced the head of the German line, which had hardly been touched. But he held to the fight with stubborn determination, maintaining the aggressive in the face of fierce German fire, full of confidence and courage which was shared by all his people. He was conducting the battle from an exposed position; death had threatened him a hundred times; fragments of flying metal

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swept across *Lion's* superstructure again and again. He seemed to bear a charmed life, and had not been touched.

And his battle-cruisers were not alone. The Fifth Battle Squadron was still concentrating its steady, accurate fire upon the last two ships of the German line, and *Von der Tann* and *Moltke* were feeling its effects. For a time *Von der Tann* had shifted her fire to the new antagonists, and scored a hit upon *Barham*. Then she was forced to abandon the attempt. Her fore and after turrets were already out of action, leaving her but the two in the waist. Now the starboard waist turret, the only one which would bear, was compelled to cease firing. The guns had grown so hot that they jammed in their slides and refused to return to the firing position. The ship was left with but a single turret able to shoot, and that turret was on the port side, handicapped by the narrow arc through which it could bear upon the enemy.

If Beatty's situation was critical, Hipper's was more so, for the total British numbers were, after all, eight against the German five, and of the German five, one ship was all but unable to shoot.

Yet Hipper knew what Beatty was still unable to guess—that the High Sea Fleet, coming up from the south, was now just over the horizon. Its leading ships should be within sight at any moment.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DESTROYERS

SINCE Beatty's signal ordering the destroyers to attack, the *Champion*, light cruiser, had been steaming ahead at full speed, followed by the twelve destroyers of the Thirteenth Flotilla, until the formation was four or five miles ahead of the battle-line. The frail ships, filled with engines and boilers, surged forward. Each had four small guns on its deck, and two twin torpedo-tubes, loaded with a total of four torpedoes. They made thirty knots in a welter of spray and foam, rolling and lurching, throwing up huge bow waves and leaving turbulent wakes. At 4.30 a signal whipped to *Champion's* yardarm, and the whole group turned towards the enemy to thrust home the attack. They would advance until they had reached torpedo range. Only their speed would protect them. Some of them would never return.

As they swept in, German torpedo-boats likewise moved to attack. At the greatest speed of which they were capable, quivering, shuddering, humming with the roar of blowers and wide-open turbines, the two flotillas approached each other in the "no-man's land" between the battle-lines, while the uninterrupted salvos of heavy projectiles rumbled back and forth over their heads. On either hand, the major combatant columns further opened fire with their secondary batteries, seeking to beat off the torpedo-attacks, and the charging destroyers were surrounded by metal, splashes rising up out of the sea as though the skies were raining shells. To complete the madness and the din, the flotillas began to fire at each other, the gunners thrusting brass cartridges into the quick-firing guns as rapidly as they could work their arms. At a

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combined speed of sixty knots the light formations dashed together, to sweep past one another on opposite courses.

Under these conditions, accurate aim was impossible. It was impossible to think. Men followed instinct and training in a fearful experience.

Three of the tiny vessels were touched by the storm of steel, and at once fell out of formation. British *Nomad* was struck by a shell which penetrated her boilers. Steam scalded the stokers; her engines faltered and she lay drifting as the furious battle swept away. One of her flotilla-mates steered to help her, but *Nomad* would accept no help. She would take care of herself.

On the other side, German *V-29* was struck by a torpedo launched from the British *Petard* as the two dashed past each other. *V-29's* bottom was rent open and she began to sink. Meantime *V-27* received two shells in her engine-room and became a crippled wreck. Before the two ships went down, their crews were taken off under fire by their sister *V-26*.

With these boats missing, the flotillas drove past each other to close the battle-cruiser lines and let loose their underwater missiles.

The German attack encountered an impenetrable barrage of fire from Beatty's secondary-batteries, and was beaten back beyond effective torpedo-range; it never managed to attain a favourable position. As it wheeled away, retiring, it saw that the British destroyers had scattered into small groups; some had already fired their torpedoes and were returning towards their own battle-cruisers; some were still driving into the German barrage with the utmost determination, wheeling and launching the long, slender cylinders of explosive. A furious mêlée began between the returning ships as they tried to cut each other down.

Admiral Hipper had turned his battle-cruiser line away before the attack of the British light craft. No line of heavy ships, German or British, dared to hold its course before a flight of torpedoes. Both navies used the same defensive

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tactics, whose effectiveness had been proved by repeated experiment—the simultaneous turn of each ship away from the menace, to attempt to steer round the dangerous waters, and in any event to place the ships so that they could be manœuvred to escape any torpedo that was sighted. Another ten minutes would elapse before the British torpedoes crossed the German line.

Hipper's defensive movement had the effect of relieving Beatty, momentarily, from the assault of the German heavy guns.

The destroyers were still between the lines, and the outcome of the torpedo-attack was still an unknown quantity. It was 4.38, just fifty minutes since the first turret salvo had belched out at the beginning of the run to the South.

And now, with the issue in the balance, a column of smoke appeared far ahead on the southern horizon. It grew larger rapidly, resolving itself into a German light cruiser, followed by tiny specks which were destroyers, and then by a line of heavy vessels. This was the High Sea Fleet, whose 59 ships were approaching at 17 knots under Admiral Scheer.

Hipper had reached security. Outnumbered, he had out-lit and out-fought his adversary, and brought Beatty south within reach of the German main body. As a result, another chapter had been written into the pages of naval history.

The Old, with its background of tradition, had been humbled by the New. The superior force placed in Admiral Beatty's hands by Admiral Jellicoe had been granted opportunity to cut down the German battle-cruisers while they were flung out alone, exposed and vulnerable—and had instead been checked and defeated. The British Commander-in-Chief had foreseen the situation and provided for it—his provisions had been spurned. Beatty, the tempestuous, had done what the enemy wished him to do—the Battle-Cruiser Fleet, whose leader had dared to divide his strength to satisfy his thirst for battle, had complied with every German hope and desire.

Hipper had lost two destroyers, and in exchange had taken two of Britain's battle-cruisers and crippled a British destroyer.

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The surviving British battle-cruisers had been fearfully battered, and had suffered far more damage than they had delivered.

The defeat could not be dismissed as the fortune of war. True, the light had favoured Germany. But the principal factor had been Beatty's neglect to concentrate his forces before going into action, a neglect made doubly acute by the failure of his battle-cruisers' gunnery. The immediate presence of the Fifth Battle Squadron would have made the run to the south a British victory.

There had been vital contributory failures in the signal organization of the British battle-cruisers, and these lay at the root of much of the evil, for they had created the circumstance which Beatty's impetuosity had aggravated. The signal which should have brought Evan-Thomas into the line with the others had not been transmitted. The signal for the distribution of gunfire had been bungled.

As to the gunnery itself, that of Germany had been superb, as had that of the Fifth Battle Squadron; while the fire of the British battle-cruisers had, as the British Official History comments, "not been very accurate."

A fundamental weakness of ship design had permitted the flash of shell detonation and powder-fires to penetrate the magazines of two British vessels, resulting in their loss. The weakness should have been corrected after the battle of Dogger Bank, where *Lion* had all but suffered the identical fate.

It was, moreover, a late date to discover that British armour-piercing shells were inferior in penetrating and bursting power to those of Germany, and that they had inferior fuse mechanisms.

Beatty's defeat was one of a nature never before experienced by the Royal Navy. But the action had been gallantly and determinedly fought on both sides, and the pieces were being reset upon the chess-board of war.

CHAPTER XXII

HIGH SEA FLEET

THE light cruiser *Southampton*, flagship of Commodore Goodenough, leading the Second Light Cruiser Squadron at the tip of the British line, was the first British vessel to sight the High Sea Fleet.

Goodenough had been steaming three to four miles ahead of Beatty's *Lion* with four scouting ships—*Southampton*, *Birmingham*, *Nottingham* and *Dublin*—5,000-ton, clipper-bowed light cruisers, with 6-inch guns and submerged torpedo-tubes—fast, handy vessels.

Southampton sighted the German *Rostock* at 4.30, far in the south-east with three half-flotillas of destroyers, forming the vanguard of the advancing Scheer.

The battle-cruiser action, sweeping south, and the German reinforcements, coming north, were approaching each other so rapidly that within the next three minutes *Southampton* was able to see the leading battleships of Scheer's long line, which stretched away out of sight over the horizon in apparently endless procession.

Goodenough sent a wireless message at once, to inform the British commanders, Beatty and Jellicoe, of the new and important discovery:—

"To Commander-in-Chief and Senior Officer, Battle-Cruiser Fleet: *Urgent! Priority!* Have sighted enemy Battle Fleet bearing approximately south-east. Course of enemy north. My position Lat. $56^{\circ}34'$ N., Long. $6^{\circ}20'$ E. Time 4.38 p.m."

As this dispatch was transmitted, *Southampton* herself charged, followed by her squadron, directly towards the German

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main fleet at full speed. Goodenough was determined to secure all the information possible—to count, if he could, the number of ships in the enemy line, since definite knowledge would be of inestimable value to his superiors in determining Britain's coming tactics.

Meantime *Champion*, leader of the British destroyers, had likewise sighted Scheer, and had likewise reported the discovery by wireless.

These messages were sent just as Beatty, still firing heavily, was closing towards the enemy battle-cruiser line to maintain contact with Hipper, who had swerved away before the British destroyer attack. The waters between the two battle-cruiser columns were still full of "dog-fighting" destroyers, circling and reforming after their dash towards the enemy; a few of the British boats were still seeking an opportunity to launch their torpedoes. Hipper's turret gunfire, momentarily checked, was being resumed with full intensity as his line straightened out after its swerve.

Beatty's present course took his flagship directly towards the head of the approaching High Sea Fleet, and Beatty himself sighted Scheer's vanguard from the bridge of the *Lion* almost at once. At 4.40 he identified, twelve miles ahead, rapidly coming nearer, the battle-line of the Imperial German Navy—a spectacle denied to British seamen since the beginning of the war.

It was quite unexpected—as recently as noon the Admiralty had reported the High Sea Fleet at anchor in the River Jade.

A tremendous surge of hope possessed the British admiral. At one stroke he adapted himself to the new situation and swept away his entire previous plan of action. The contest with the German battle-cruisers became secondary. The appearance of the High Sea Fleet was the opportunity for which Britain had been waiting for many war-time months. The German fleet, caught at sea, must never return to harbour.

If Beatty lacked the weapons with which to destroy this great dreadnought force, Jellicoe, only fifty miles away, was coming

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south at all speed with the entire weight of Britain's naval strength. If Beatty could decoy the German fleet north, induce Scheer to hold his course for just another hour, then a general fleet engagement would take place compared with which the present action was mere preliminary.

As to his own situation, Beatty felt no anxiety. He had been willing to take punishment in the hope of dealing it, but he had sufficient superiority of speed over the enemy's best to withdraw beyond the range of German gunfire at any time it suited his purpose.

He would turn to the north and fight a retreating action, employing the identical tactics which Hipper had used to lure him south. But this time the retreat would be staged with sea-power itself as the stake.

At 4.43 the signal streamed from *Lion's* battered yard-arm: "Alter course in succession 16 points (180 degrees) to starboard." The flagship's helm went over as the flags were hauled down, and *Lion* described a massive curve through the sea, straightening out upon a north-westerly course. *Princess Royal*, *Tiger* and *New Zealand* followed her, making 25 knots—and the column steamed directly away from the approaching Scheer. Each ship checked her gunfire as she turned; the turrets trained round to the other beam, and as soon as the range was clear, the artillery duel against the German battle-cruisers was resumed. But events had taken place so rapidly that the British squadron had already come within gun-range of the High Sea Fleet, and Scheer's leading battleships had opened fire at the British battle-cruisers at the maximum elevation of their guns.

As he was turning, Admiral Beatty sent a message to Admiral Jellicoe: "To Commander-in-Chief: Have sighted enemy Battle Fleet, bearing south-east. My position is 56° 35' N., 6° 04' E. Time 4.45 p.m."

Simultaneously Beatty hoisted the recall to his destroyers, still scattered towards the enemy line.

Between Beatty and the advancing German dreadnoughts the Second Light Cruiser Squadron was thrusting boldly forward in

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quest of information, hoping to reach torpedo-attack position upon the enemy bow. *Nottingham* had actually fired a torpedo and the four rakish ships were within 13,000 yards of the foe when a heavy German fire broke out, and they turned, manoeuvring as beautifully as ships at drill, and headed after their own company, zig-zagging to dodge the storm of enemy salvos, of which not a single shell touched them.

Goodenough had gained the information he desired. At 4.48 his wireless was active: "To Commander-in-Chief and Senior Officer, Battle-Cruiser Fleet: *Urgent! Priority!* Course of enemy Battle Fleet is north. Formation column. Vanguard consists of *Kaiser*-class ships. . . . Enemy battle-cruisers are closing upon enemy Battle Fleet from the north. My position is 56° 29' N., 6° 14' E."

Meanwhile two British destroyers, *Nestor* and *Nicator*, led by Commander the Hon. E. B. S. Bingham in *Nestor*, were making a desperate, extraordinary attempt to approach the battleships of the High Sea Fleet and attack with their remaining torpedoes. Turning recklessly away from their own forces, they had charged at full speed to within four thousand yards of the head of the German line, surrounded by falling shells from Scheer's vanguard. Each launched a torpedo. They could see the German turrets shooting after Beatty, and the spitting muzzles of guns, pointing straight at themselves, in *Rostock* and the German destroyers.

Suddenly *Nestor* was struck . . . *Nicator* avoided ramming her by wheeling violently.

Full before the guns of the oncoming German dreadnoughts, *Nestor* lay drifting helplessly, and signalled her companion to go back and rejoin the flotilla. *Nicator* made off, zig-zagging to escape the German salvos, her captain leaning coolly against the front of the bridge smoking his pipe. In *Nestor* Commander Bingham ordered the last torpedo to be made ready.

Only one group of the British Battle-Cruiser Fleet was still coming down towards Scheer.

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The Fifth Battle Squadron was still blazing out its heavy fire at the rear ships of Hipper's line.

At 4.52 Evan-Thomas passed by Beatty on an opposite course, and found his fire masked by the British battle-cruisers. Beatty tried to signal the course "North"—but Beatty's ships were surrounded by splashes rising from the concentrated fire of a dozen German vessels, and signal flags were indistinguishable. Evan-Thomas, astonished to see that his leader had only four ships left, held on to the south, thinking to take up the burden of the fight.

Then, a moment later, as he emerged from behind the last British battle-cruiser, he sighted the High Sea Fleet and grasped the situation. Almost immediately *Barham*, his flag-ship, was hit, and Evan-Thomas ordered an immediate turn after Beatty. As the helm went over, *Barham* was struck again. Amid a thunder of falling shells the Fifth Battle Squadron swung round to the north at 4.58, *Malaya*, the last ship, steering out of the line to avoid the ferocious German concentration. The four rugged dreadnoughts, following the retreat, settled grimly to reply; they were some three miles astern of the battle-cruisers, and they remarked that, while they were turning, Hipper had likewise reversed his course and was now steering north in the van of the High Sea Fleet.

Every British ship was being driven at top speed, firing her guns at the maximum rate, and receiving heavy enemy fire—every decision, every command, had been made and obeyed within seconds of time, in a furious changing panorama of battle. Within short minutes all the British force under Beatty had turned northward into a long, loose speeding column, belching smoke and turret action.

Left behind were *Nomad* and *Nestor*, crippled and drifting—the first a sacrifice to the destroyer attack upon Hipper, the second shot down in her mad dash at Scheer. Both had refused assistance; neither had struck her colours.

Waiting a certain end, the crews of both ships were busy with the quiet gallantry so typical of their Navy's tradition.

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The wounded were got up and laid near the boats and life-rafts. The officers gathered together the confidential papers and signal code-books and set about destroying them. For the moment everything was still, so that they could hear the lapping of the water alongside; Beatty's vessels and the German vanguard were vanishing to the northward in a rumbling diminuendo of distant gunfire; to the south-east the main body of the High Sea Fleet was growing larger and larger, a tremendous pageant whose leaders had already swept on. Minute by minute the German dreadnoughts were more distinct, until every tiny detail of the massive ships was visible.

The tension was almost unbearable. *Nomad* was waiting with her sole torpedo. At last, when the enemy column was only a mile away, there was a sudden outburst of flame and smoke from half a hundred German guns. The shells began to arrive with an ear-splitting crash and a hiss of seething water, and as the little ship was riddled by projectiles of all calibres, she launched her torpedo. *Nomad's* stern went down—there was an ominous sound of loose gear sliding and banging below decks. All those who could, went overboard, swimming, clinging to wreckage, supporting the wounded, and the destroyer disappeared from view.

Five miles away, *Nestor* had seen *Nomad* "literally smothered," and knew what was in store. Officers and crew went on with their duties in perfect discipline.

At about 10,000 yards the High Sea Fleet opened fire, and the waiting British torpedo was sent upon its journey. Receiving mortal hits, *Nestor* began to follow *Nomad* down, and her people were ordered into the boats, which were so leaky from shell damage that one of them sank immediately, tossing its men into the water. The sea was pouring into *Nestor*—the sinking ship's forecastle reared up until she was perpendicular—then she slid out of sight, colours flying, and the little band of survivors gave her a final cheer. A stout-hearted seaman struck up "God Save the King," and "Tipperary," and the rest joined in. Commander Bingham's intrepidity had earned the second Victoria Cross of the Jutland battle.

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About an hour later the survivors of both ships were picked up by a German destroyer and taken prisoner. . . . Below decks in a strange ship, they could marvel at the fate which had spared them from the murderous steel and finally rescued them from the sea.

There was no realization, in the German fleet, that Beatty's movement was one of allurements.

Rather the German hope beat high in the belief that a group of unsupported British vessels had been trapped and was running for its life. The moment had come to throw away caution, to abandon restraint, to follow and destroy all eight of these incautious dreadnoughts. It was the situation which Scheer had schemed for months to achieve—the German dream since 1914. The coming hour might give the High Sea Fleet superiority at last—might be the turning point of naval supremacy.

The success of Hipper's battle-cruisers gave the German command a sense of confidence and power such as had not been felt throughout the war—a distorted view of the invincibility of the German vessels and the superiority of their gunners, a dangerous, optimistic minimizing of their antagonists. This was heightened by Scheer's belief that his trap strategy had succeeded and that Jellicoe, successfully deceived, still lay at Scapa Flow.

Greed led the German Commander-in-Chief to expose his fleet—not only to steam farther away from German waters, but to abandon the compactness of formation which was his only defence against surprise, his only proper approach to battle with an equal or superior. Suddenly bold, he handled his ships as though he, and not Britain, were master of the seas . . . and with this change in German policy, the tide of fortune, which had thus far favoured the ships from Wilhelmshaven in their precise and magnificent achievement against Beatty, began to desert the Germany which clutched at greater success.

The first mishap occurred as Hipper turned his battle-cruisers to place them at the head of the High Sea Fleet. Accurate

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navigation on the southerly run had brought Hipper into perfect junction with Scheer's ships. As the British fire was partially masked—when Beatty and Evan-Thomas swept by each other—he had ordered a 180-degree change of course.

He turned his flagship to starboard—towards the enemy—and this nullified the effect of his recent defensive swerve away from the British torpedoes. As his ships followed him, executing the turn, they met the flight of British missiles which had been launched some ten minutes earlier during the final moments of the destroyer attack. Speeding through the water, steered by automatic gyroscopic mechanisms, propelled by tiny turbines driven by hot compressed air and steam, each torpedo ran fifteen feet deep, leaving behind a track of bubbles which rose to the surface in a turbulent wake to betray its presence.

Seydlitz, third of the German battle-cruisers, sighted three torpedo-tracks coming directly towards her. The German ship was in the middle of her turn to starboard, and unable to dodge. Two torpedoes missed her. The third hit. A terrific concussion jolted under her forecastle, and tons of water poured through a gaping hole in the hull plating. For the moment the damage was localized by the water-tight doors and bulkheads, but the injury was to play a significant rôle as the battle went on.

Hipper's new course placed him once more roughly parallel to Beatty; he was about three miles in front of the leading German dreadnoughts.

Now, for a time, the British situation seemed to justify all the German optimism, and served as a gigantic lure to draw Scheer and Hipper on. The German line, from vanguard to rear, was one great formation of pursuit, the column stretching out more and more every minute as the leading ships strove to overtake the British.

Heading the German line, Hipper's five battle-cruisers were pouring their fire into Beatty's four. Next, Germany's four newest and best battleships, *König*, *Grosser Kurfürst*, *Markgraf* and *Kronprinz*—known as the Fifth Division—had

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answered the order to make "all possible speed" and were almost abreast Evan-Thomas's Fifth Battle Squadron, where they were maintaining themselves by prodigies of engineering labour, steaming at 23 and even 24 knots, though their accredited speed was only 21. Their 12-inch guns were joined to those of the battle-cruisers, firing after Beatty. Further astern, shooting at the British Fifth Battle Squadron at maximum elevation, came the eight dreadnoughts of the Sixth and First Divisions, making every effort to keep up with the fight.

At this moment nineteen German capital ships were concentrating their fire upon eight British vessels, and it was fire that was both accurate and effective.

The area into which the fleets were steaming was shrouded in a gathering haze, forerunner of patchy fog. Innumerable particles of smoke from guns and funnels lay suspended in the moist air; the grey sullen sea was lashed and torn by the fall of metal and the propellers of the dozens of ships flailing past. The hulls under the smoky sky seemed fantastic and unreal . . . the battle had been going on for more than an hour—all sense of time was lost, and there was only a grey world of water, steel, sky, labouring men and struggling ships.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE GRAND FLEET

ADMIRAL JELLICOE had received the first wireless report that an enemy had been sighted at 2.20 in the afternoon. At the time, he had been 65 miles north-north-west of the scene of "contact," steaming towards the Skagerrak in accordance with his plan. The fleet speed was 15 knots, and the ships were zig-zagging for submarine defence. During the day there had been several delays to examine merchant ships and fishing-boats, so that the fleet was nearly twenty miles behind the point which Jellicoe had expected to reach at this time.

Except for these episodes the cruise had been uneventful—like fifty other war-time "sweeps" to sea. The weather was fine. The people of the fleet found the duty light and agreeable in comparison to the rigours of the recent winter.

The twenty-four dreadnoughts were formed into a cruising formation of six columns abreast, four ships in each column. In front and on the flanks, thirty-nine destroyers acted as a submarine screen. Farther out, ten light cruisers were an outer screen, two on each flank and six up ahead, with the fast mine-layer *Abdiel* cruising free where she could easily steam off for special duty.

From the middle of the fleet as far as the eye could reach there were the masts and hulls of ships in every direction—a marvellous spectacle under the sun, and one that never failed to stir the spirit. The fleet was stupendous in its magnitude. The pride of being part of it was something intimate and peculiar to each of the forty-five thousand men, from the

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youngest boy to the Commander-in-Chief. A brotherhood of voluntary service was in it—each man had come forward of his own will, to enlist, to accept his commission. They would stand together in unshakable unity, a rock which was the very soul of the nation behind it. Should anything shatter the fleet, then the Empire would go down, and more would be lost than the mere lives and ships that were here to-day.

Out of sight, fifteen miles ahead, steamed the Grand Fleet vanguard, with the cruiser *Hampshire* and a destroyer stationed half-way between to relay signals.

Seven armoured cruisers, each accompanied by a destroyer, were spread wide across the sea, so that each cruiser was just within sight of her neighbours. These were large vessels, the oldest of Jellicoe's ships, including *Black Prince*, *Duke of Edinburgh*, *Warrior* and *Defence*; *Minotaur*, *Shannon*, and *Cochrane*.

Still farther ahead, at the tip of all, steamed the Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron, under Rear-Admiral Hood, who had the battle-cruisers *Invincible*, *Inflexible* and *Indomitable*, the new light cruisers *Chester* and *Canterbury*, and the destroyers *Shark*, *Acasta*, *Ophelia* and *Christopher*.

The first warning that an enemy had been sighted caused Admiral Jellicoe no particular anticipation of events to come. Under the influence of the Admiralty's statement that the High Sea Fleet had remained in port, the British Commander-in-Chief expected no meeting with an enemy force of real strength.

Still, the "contact" demanded active precautions.

Jellicoe had intended, if Beatty sighted German ships, to send Hood's Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron to join the Battle-Cruiser Fleet at full speed. Now he hesitated. The reported enemy consisted of light craft. Suppose these tried to escape through the Skagerrak into the Baltic? Hood was at present in excellent position to cut off such a manœuvre.

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For the present Jellicoe contented himself with ordering all vessels to raise steam for full speed, in the meantime continuing his zig-zag course eastward at 15 knots. Meantime Hood, on his own initiative, forged ahead to guard the entrance to the Skagerrak.

New information came at 2.43, materially altering the situation. *Galatea* reported, by wireless from the scene of contact, smoke "like that of a fleet" to the eastward, and a moment later amplified the report by saying the smoke appeared to come from "seven heavy ships."

Jellicoe hesitated no longer, but increased the Grand Fleet's speed to 17 knots, ceased zig-zagging, and steered in the direction of the "contact." Twelve minutes later he increased speed to 18 knots, ordered maximum possible steam to be raised at once in all boilers, and signalled the fleet to "clear ship for action." Hood, for the present, he kept where he was, still thinking of the Skagerrak. The measures were still precautionary—Jellicoe wanted to be ready, but there still seemed little likelihood that he would actually be called on to do battle.

The initial order to work up steam had interrupted the tranquil routine of the afternoon, and sent a current of anticipation through the ships. Something, at any rate, had occurred to stir the powers at the top and differentiate this from a normal cruise.

The order to "clear for action" put every man to work, breaking down the life-lines, leading out fire-hoses, closing battle-doors and hatches, stowing inflammable material behind armour, preparing the guns for battle, making ready emergency repair equipment—a host of tasks to bring each vessel to her maximum readiness. Each man knew his detailed tasks. The petty officers supervised the work and the officers went to their various stations and departments to satisfy themselves that everything was ready.

Jellicoe was still waiting to learn what ships the reported "smoke" indicated.

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His next item of information came just after 3.0 o'clock, when the Admiralty sent the position in which the German light cruiser *Elbing* had been when she wirelessly "Enemy in sight," as established by the British Intelligence and directional-wireless stations.

Later he received a message from Beatty giving the latter's dead-reckoning navigational position. According to this, Beatty's *Lion* was seventy-one miles from the fleet flagship *Iron Duke*—farther away than the Commander-in-Chief had anticipated. Jellicoe increased his speed to 19 knots.

Thus far it appeared that the reported enemy was a detached group of ships, perhaps including battle-cruisers, flying north-east as Beatty strove to overtake them. If this were so, Jellicoe expected to intercept the Germans at about 4.0 o'clock, and he ordered all his flag officers to explain the situation to the ships under their command. He notified the leader of his destroyer flotillas that hostile forces might be sighted within relatively few minutes.

The fleet had been transformed from the broad slow pageantry of mid-afternoon, into a spectacle of hurrying, aroused grey magnificence.

At 3.40 Jellicoe received an urgent message announcing that *Lion* had sighted five enemy battle-cruisers accompanied by a great number of destroyers. A second message stated that the enemy was now steering south-east, running in the direction of German waters. A third announced that Beatty was in action.

There was a sea-fight going on, but it was sweeping directly away from Jellicoe at the speed of battle-cruisers, sixty miles or more in front of him, and no power at which he could drive his ships could overtake it. It was a repetition of the Dogger Bank situation, a continuation of the duel between Beatty and Hipper, and the Grand Fleet would not be able to take part in it.

But the British Commander-in-Chief must support his battle-cruisers in every way possible. Every moment was taking them nearer to enemy waters.

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Jellicoe increased the Grand Fleet's speed to 20 knots, almost the utmost of which his dreadnoughts were capable—it was the greatest speed at which the fleet had ever steamed as a unit. He ordered the ships to steer clear of each other's wakes, so that they would make all possible progress through the water. Simultaneously he ordered Admiral Hood to take the Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron on in advance at full speed, and, if possible, to join forces with Beatty.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE RUN TO THE NORTH

BEATTY'S battle-cruiser fleet was finding the run north heavy work. The roar of artillery had doubled in volume, and a new fury had fallen upon the British ships.

Within a few minutes after taking up the chase, the Germans had secured the gun-range. At 4.59 *Lion* and *Tiger* were hit simultaneously by *Lützow* and *Seydlitz*—Hipper's battle-cruisers were intent on the final destruction of the enemy squadrons.

Beatty, now on the defensive, swerved away sharply to throw the German gunners off the targets. But Hipper was forcing the issue, and refused to be so easily denied. The British ships had no sooner straightened out again upon the course, than the German salvos began to creep closer once more. Beatty's flagship, steaming northward, was approaching the spot where *Queen Mary* had gone down forty minutes earlier—a British destroyer was just rescuing a few swimmers from a great oily patch of flotsam and wreckage.

At this spot *Lion* seemed fated to follow *Queen Mary* to the bottom. Salvos came hurtling towards her with implacable thundering persistence. Two shells crashed home, and it became evident that further punishment would finish her. The British flagship was afire in half a dozen places; shell fragments had riddled the salt-water mains and fire-hoses until it was almost impossible to get water to the flames, some of which roared up from powder-fires of terrific intensity. Since the beginning of the action *Lion* had been struck thirteen times by heavy shells. The main and gun-decks were littered with tangled wreckage; dead and wounded men lay everywhere through the batteries, and the surgeons and stretcher parties were labouring heroically

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to save life; electric lighting had been blown away—dim lanterns and flickering flames lit the smoky, stinking interiors; under suffocating clouds of smoke it seemed incredible that she was still a seaworthy man-of-war.

Tiger, the third in line, had been hit seventeen times, and was a similar picture; *Princess Royal* had suffered heavily. Only *New Zealand*, ship with the talisman, had escaped virtually without injury. The battle-cruisers needed a breathing space, time to fight their fires, to restore damaged turrets to service, to take stock of their injuries.

Beatty steered north-west at 24 knots, to open the range and break off the action. His ships' engines were still answering every demand made of them. It was nearly ten minutes past five. Up ahead the advance light cruisers were exchanging scattered shots with the German light cruisers ahead of Hipper.

There was a stout obstacle to prevent the Germans from closing in and pressing after Beatty. Three miles astern, the Fifth Battle Squadron under Evan-Thomas was acting as the most magnificent of bucklers—four ships parrying the German metal, holding off more than double their number and making it impossible for Hipper to follow Beatty's movement.

The achievement of these vessels was the outstanding event of the hour between 5.0 and 6.0—an epic of the sea.

Evan-Thomas had turned to the north just before 5.0. At first he came under the distant fire of the German Sixth and First Divisions, but these were soon out-distanced. His real antagonists were the four dreadnought-battleships of the German Fifth Division—*König*, *Grosser Kurfürst*, *Markgraf* and *Kronprinz*—and as Beatty drew out of gun-range at 5.10 these were joined by the five German battle-cruisers, so that he faced and engaged nine ships, the cream of the Imperial Navy. *Barham* and *Valiant* engaged the German battle-cruisers in reply, while *Warspite* and *Malaya* held off the enemy dreadnoughts.

The German gunnery was accurate and rapid, 12-inch salvos from the battleships, 11- and 12-inch from the battle-cruisers.

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Ten minutes after the turn, when the rest of the High Sea Fleet was being left astern and this phase of the action was attaining its height, the shells began to find their mark with the implacable grim hitting power that marked all the German shooting at Jutland. And the Fifth Battle Squadron demonstrated that British ships could shoot and hit with equal implacability.

Barham, the flagship, was the first to receive enemy metal. At 5.10 she was struck thrice in rapid succession. Evan-Thomas was steaming in a north-westerly direction following Beatty. The course made the rear ships the best targets for the enemy, particularly *Malaya*, the last in the line. From now onward the latter was mantled in a storm of German fire—six deafening salvos fell about her every minute, and once the observers in her tops counted nine in quick uninterrupted sequence, so that she seemed to be steaming through a cauldron of waterspouts.

But the squadron's heavy armour had been built for punishment. Fourteen times during the duel German projectiles struck Evan-Thomas's ships, and every time were turned aside from the vitals by the thick battleship plating. No turret was penetrated, no important spot reached. Through it all the 15-inch batteries reared up, delivering their steady salvos.

On the German side of the contest the battleships *Grosser Kurfürst* and *Markgraf* were the first to suffer, when *Warspite* and *Malaya* struck them. Then the salvos reached the battle-cruisers at the head of Hipper's column, which offered the British their best targets. Hit by hit, the damage grew.

Seydlitz, *Lützow* and *Derfflinger* were heavily assailed, and *Seydlitz*, already hurt, was seriously injured. At the beginning she took two impacts in the forecastle, aggravating the shell and torpedo damage there. At 5.10 a 15-inch shell struck and penetrated through the face-armour of her starboard waist turret, putting the right gun out of action and causing heavy casualties. The next projectile entered the after waist turret, which had already been put out of action, and caused a fresh inferno of powder-fire. Still another beat into the port broad-side battery, devastating two casemates; a sixth struck full into

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the right gun of the after turret and destroyed it, while a seventh smashed down upon the roof of the adjacent gun-house. Half the fighting value of the ship had been remorselessly beaten away—she was afire, four of her turret guns were out of action, her secondary battery was a shambles, and her forecastle was so battered and full of water that she had begun to go down by the head and was losing her speed.

In *Von der Tann* the sole remaining turret went out of action as both guns ran hot and refused to return to the firing position. Unable to fire any turret, she could do no more damage to the enemy line. Her captain sheered out to one side of the column, but kept on with the formation to prevent concentration upon the other, still effective ships.

At 5.30 British shells crashed down upon *Lützow* and *Derfflinger*, the latter being struck twice, the former once—and with this hit Hipper's flagship lost both main and secondary wireless and was without radio-communication. At the rear of the line another shell struck the *Markgraf*.

In a pure battering contest, Evan-Thomas, firing half the number of guns opposed to him, secured, all told, the same number of hits—fourteen. Without suffering any vital injury he had inflicted heavy damage, and by checking all the plans of the German strategy, turned the run to the north into a British victory.

The visibility had grown worse. Patches of smoke-laden mist between the lines hid the combatants from each other's sight with growing frequency, and there were moments when the gunnery stilled, to be resumed as the distant vague shapes reappeared; the flash of enemy gun-fire was visible when the ships themselves could not be seen.

For thirty minutes the Battle-Cruiser Fleet had slowly been drawing ahead in the race north. By 5.40 the German Fifth Division had been left behind out of gun-range.

The chase had stretched the High Sea Fleet into an open column nearly twenty-five miles from tip to rear. The German

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battle-cruisers had drawn six miles ahead of the leading German battleships; the Fifth Division had likewise opened a gap of three or four miles between itself and the other divisions, while the ten oldest vessels in Scheer's main body were far in the rear, unable to keep up with the pace of the leaders. The pre-dreadnoughts, with their maximum 18 knots, were out of the running.

Now a new and extraordinary situation was forming as Jellicoe came down to meet the battle.

Beatty had had what he desired—a breathing space. Hard work was getting the fires in his battle-cruisers under control and restoring damaged turrets to readiness. A quick survey of injuries told him that the majority of his guns were able to shoot, while the hulls and engines, his greatest concern, were all intact. Meantime, though he had lost contact and Hipper was out of sight, he had reached a commanding position upon the bow of the German line, and he was beginning to think about the impending meeting with Jellicoe. It would be best to get back within touch of the German battle-cruisers at once. At 5.20 he signalled to his four ships: "Prepare to resume action," and steered north, expecting that this would bring him across the head of the German line.

Fifteen minutes later, with the enemy not yet in sight, he turned a point farther east, to a course north-by-east, to hasten closing the range. A determined calm had settled over the ships.

Beatty's movement brought about extraordinary consequences.

When Hipper suddenly observed the new menace—Beatty's phantom ships in the mist upon his port bow—he was striving to close the range upon the Fifth Battle Squadron, whose 15-inch guns were still battering intermittently from the west and had just secured hits upon *Lützow* and *Derfflinger*. Hipper had just received, by wireless, a message from Scheer ordering him to keep closer to the enemy.

He wished to report Beatty's reappearance to his Commander-in-Chief, but the last hit had stripped *Lützow* of her wireless,

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and the Fleet Flagship was beyond visual signal distance, ten miles astern.

Hipper felt it inadvisable to allow Beatty to cross his bows. In naval warfare an encircling movement of this nature brings tremendous power to bear upon a point where the reply can only be weak. In defence the German admiral turned his ships to starboard to steer north-north-east, approximately paralleling Beatty's new movement at a distance of seven miles. At this moment Beatty sighted him and opened fire. It was twenty minutes to six, just an hour since the British battle-cruisers had been thrown upon the defensive by the appearance of the High Sea Fleet. Now, at last, Beatty had regained a position from which he could operate aggressively.

For the first time during the action the conditions of visibility were markedly in favour of the British. The lowering sun appeared through the mist behind Beatty's ships, dazzling the eyes of the German gunners so that they were unable to reply effectively to the British fire. Beatty's gunners, on the other hand, had the German ships clearly visible at relatively short range, and made the best of the moment. The rumbling broadsides had no sooner begun than a hit was scored upon *Lützow*.

Now Hipper made another discovery. Ahead of Beatty, apparently massing for a torpedo attack, there were the silhouettes of many British destroyers and light cruisers; again the new menace was upon the German bow.

And again Hipper gave ground to the east. It was as though an inflexible pressure were being applied to the head of the German line, forcing it eastward into a massive curve.

The rear German ships, many miles astern, were still surging in the north-westerly direction the leaders had first taken. The whole gigantic twenty-five mile column of one hundred vessels was forming a long, irregular arc, its tip veering off to the north-east and east, degree by degree, minute by minute as Beatty harried the van.

And this was the moment of Beatty's triumph, for to the north, at a quarter before six, he caught sight of something to

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make the blood beat—the first outlying cruisers in the vanguard of Jellicoe's Grand Fleet were appearing as tiny specks coming down at 20 knots. The Battle-Cruiser Fleet had accomplished its task.

Beatty's guns were thundering. He would press the enemy still further, turn the German van—screen Jellicoe to the last moment. He steered farther eastward, closing the range still more, and the Fifth Battle Squadron followed him to take up the enveloping movement.

The German line bent, paralleling Beatty in an inner concentric circle. Hipper had lost all sight of the British battle-cruisers in the mist, but Beatty was pounding him accurately, securing a grim revenge. *Lützow* received still another hit. *Derfflinger* was struck just above the forward torpedo-room, which began to fill with water; she settled by the head and her captain ordered the entire forward part of the ship to be evacuated. In *Seydlitz* a succession of hits crashed down upon the damaged forecastle, as though attracted to this weakest part of her; a great fire flared up in her bows, the flames and smoke beating back over the bridge and forward turrets—from the British line she appeared to be sinking.

Hipper and Scheer were alike without warning that a hundred British vessels of war were coming down from the north just beyond Beatty . . . but now Hipper made the discovery of still another threat which led the Germans to a serious misconception of the strategical situation.

To the east, Rear-Admiral Hood appeared with his Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron in a position which, from the German point of view, threatened disaster.

CHAPTER XXV

HOOD

HOOD had been twenty-five miles on the Grand Fleet's bow when, at about 4.0 o'clock, he had received Jellicoe's order to go to Beatty's support. He had calculated south-south-east as the proper course, and at 4.12 had headed in that direction at 25 knots. He flung his two light cruisers out as scouts, and formed his four destroyers into a close screen in front of him.

It had been a difficult day for navigation. By mid-afternoon a considerable error had crept into the British reckoning, which affected all the calculations dealing with the juncture between Jellicoe's and Beatty's forces. In Beatty's ships in particular, which had been steaming on many varied courses at high speed, exact track had been lost of the position, and their wireless reports, from the "contact" on, had given information which did not at all coincide with the true latitude and longitude.

Now Hood, coming south with his nine vessels, was seriously affected by the cumulative errors. Between his reckoning and that of Beatty, there was a discrepancy of eighteen miles. If both men steamed to what they believed was the identical spot they would arrive far out of sight of each other.

Instead of steering directly to meet the *Lion*, Hood was actually coming south nearly twenty miles to the eastward. At half-past five, when he had been steaming to the support for a little over an hour, he had reached a point abreast the German battle-cruisers but east of them, and could neither hear nor see anything of the action which was taking place; he seemed destined to sweep by out of all touch with it.

But at this time Hipper was just beginning his easterly move-

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ment—and ahead of Hipper, well to the north-east of him, the German Second Scouting Group of four light cruisers, accompanied by the destroyers of the Second Flotilla, were feeling their way on as the very outermost German vanguard. At 5.35 these ships caught sight of *Chester*, one of Admiral Hood's scouts. *Chester* had just heard the rumble of guns in the west, seen suspicious smoke, and was steaming to investigate.

When the British scout detected the indistinct forms of the German light cruisers in the mist, she was momentarily deceived as the German ships made the British recognition signal. She swung to a parallel course to examine the new appearance more closely. Then, all at once, the four German cruisers began to fire at a range of 8,000 yards, and within five minutes *Chester*, with three guns out of action, wrecked boats, holes in funnels and hull, was forced to make off to the north-east at full speed to escape total destruction.

At the first sound of this gun-fire, Hood had run straight towards it. It was 5.40 and he knew it was time for him to be coming up with the fight. At 25 knots he steered between the *Chester* and her pursuers, and towards 6.0 had the enemy in sight through the mist and opened fire with the heavy turret guns of *Invincible*, *Inflexible* and *Indomitable*.

The totally unexpected main-battery salvos sent the German ships west in retreat, flying back towards the shelter of their own forces, firing torpedoes and throwing out a smoke-screen as they ran. In five minutes they had vanished—but before they did so *Pillau* had been struck. A 12-inch shell had crashed through the forward funnel and penetrated one of her stokeholds; the upper and lower bridges and chart-house had been demolished and she had lost a third of her speed.

Wiesbaden had been disabled. A half-ton projectile had crashed through her side to burst in the engine-room—fragments had pierced the main steam-pipe and riddled the turbine-casings. . . . She came to a stop and lay drifting.

To cover the light cruisers' flight, the German Second Destroyer Flotilla thrust forward to attack Hood. As they drew

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near they were met by Hood's four destroyers and the light cruiser *Canterbury*, and there was a wild mêlée at close quarters—no one knew what was taking place in the mist and smoke. The quick-firing guns spat out as rapidly as they could shoot, torpedoes plunged from tubes, splashed into the water, their tracks instantly lost to sight. The outnumbered British destroyers suffered heavily, but managed to prevent the attack from reaching Hood's battle-cruisers. The price they paid was the loss of the destroyer *Shark*, whose crippled hulk became the target for ship after ship as the enemy swept down. Her wounded captain, Commander Loftus Jones, his right leg blown off by a shell, took a place at the last remaining gun, and with a handful of surviving officers and men kept it firing to the end. Meantime *Acasta*, trying to go alongside under fire to rescue the crew, was heroically waved away. A few minutes later *Shark* went down with the loss of all but six of her crew of 89 men.

Hood's three battle-cruisers, eluding the flight of German torpedoes, steamed on undamaged, heading northward. The British force had suffered the loss of one of its four destroyers, had injuries to a second and to both light cruisers. But these damages were small in the face of its accomplishment—it had crippled one German light cruiser, injured another, done minor damage to various German destroyers and drained two important flotillas of their torpedoes. Most important of all, Hood had unwittingly impersonated a force several times his actual strength, to the serious deception of the German command.

The first news Hipper had of this encounter came at 6.0, when he received a signal relayed from the cruiser leader: "Am under fire from enemy battleships." A moment later he was handed a dispatch: "*Wiesbaden* disabled."

Hipper, being forced more and more to the east by Beatty's pressure, was steaming directly towards the new danger, and almost at once sighted the retreating German cruisers and destroyers, running before Hood—they came out of the mist to meet him as though before the massed power of Britain's navy.

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None of them, in the moment of surprise, had identified the vessels which had fired on them. They had all magnified the new antagonist to imposing dimensions. The commodore commanding the light cruisers believed he had faced several battleships or battle-cruisers. Some of his subordinates had "counted four dreadnoughts of the *Queen Elizabeth* or *Iron Duke* class." The destroyers said it had been "an enemy main body of numerous battleships."

Hipper found himself forging into an angular pocket of hostile capital ships—Beatty to the north of him, strangers to the east of him. Who were the strangers? There was no time to lose. He had pushed ahead out of sight of his own fleet, into dangerous exposure, and Beatty was hitting him heavily.

At 6.10, with the burning *Wiesbaden* in sight just in front of him, Hipper made the signal for his battle-cruisers to reverse course simultaneously, and the five ships turned together to starboard to run back towards Scheer.

With this movement all the scouting and vanguard forces at the head of the German line were doubling back in retreat, and the spear-point of the German thrust had been blunted.

CHAPTER XXVI

IRON DUKE

NEITHER Jellicoe nor Beatty was aware of the adventure which Hood's forces had had, nor of its effect upon the tactics of the enemy.

To the north, Jellicoe had been having the utmost difficulty in estimating the situation and determining his plan of action. As he steamed towards the battle area his field of vision had grown more and more restricted, and the reports from the Battle-Cruiser Fleet had grown increasingly contradictory and confusing.

More than anything else, the weather was becoming the dominant factor of the situation. Throughout the afternoon the visibility had been poor. After six o'clock it grew rapidly worse—never more than 12–14,000 yards, and in many patches less than 2,000. The fleets steamed at high speed through seas shrouded with smoke and mist, in which not only the enemy, but their own forces were lost to sight time and time again. In this confusion, heightened by the complexity of the formations and the excitement of battle, the carefully organized scouting services disintegrated, and detailed information was impossible to acquire—the reports, when they did come, were as often as not wrong, and there was no way of interpreting what was right from what was wrong.

After Hood's departure, Jellicoe had received no news at all for thirty minutes; this was the period of Beatty's run to the south, and the Commander-in-Chief was without any details of the battle-cruiser action—he was not to learn of the loss of *Indefatigable* and *Queen Mary* until next day. He had continued southward after the fight at all possible speed.

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Then, at a quarter to five, had come the sudden cluster of wireless dispatches which told of sighting the High Sea Fleet from Beatty's van—course north—and Jellicoe had learned that he and Scheer were both abroad in full strength, advancing directly towards one another, all previous information and surmise to the contrary. Beatty would, of course, fall back upon the Grand Fleet, trying to draw the enemy after him. The long-anticipated general engagement was an immediate likelihood.

Jellicoe had notified his ships of the situation, and informed the Admiralty by wireless that "fleet action" was imminent.

The Grand Fleet was still in the tremendous cruising formation of six columns, four dreadnoughts in each column. The 39 destroyers still formed an inner screen, with eight light cruisers beyond them and eight old armoured cruisers as a scouting line up in front. From this formation, a line of battle could be deployed in any direction, the dreadnoughts wheeling into one unbroken column to meet the foe. In the circumstances, deployment might be expected to take place either on the right wing column, or on the left wing column or possibly on the centre to meet the situation as Jellicoe found it once he had the enemy in sight.

The important factor was the course and bearing on which the enemy would be encountered—this would determine the British tactics, the direction of the British deployment, and it was precisely this vital point that Jellicoe had most difficulty in ascertaining.

At the battle of Trafalgar, Nelson had sighted the French fleet at daybreak of a clear day, and joined action just before noon. For six hours, in full sight of his antagonist, he had closed the enemy at an average speed of about two and a half miles an hour.

To-day, in thick weather, the rival Battle Fleets of Britain and Germany were closing one another at forty miles an hour; the entire "approach" would take place within the next hour, and only minutes, seconds, would be allowed for tactical decisions and preliminary signals.

At Trafalgar, a total of seventy-three ships were engaged.

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To-day, two hundred and fifty were present. Jellicoe would require over twenty minutes to turn his huge approach formation into a battle-line, and there would be need for "handling of ships such as had never been dreamed of by seamen before."

The period of tremendous tension that followed had been one of continued lack of information. When the cruisers in Jellicoe's vanguard finally sighted the van of Beatty's forces, the contact came some twenty minutes earlier than Jellicoe had expected it, and was established, not directly ahead, but at the right wing of the broad front. This was the result of the navigational discrepancies between the Grand Fleet and the Battle-Cruiser Fleet.

Jellicoe's *Black Prince* could just see Beatty's battle-cruisers, which had begun driving Hipper to the east. She reported to Admiral Jellicoe—but the message was garbled.

Now events moved with incredible swiftness, a jumble of simultaneous happenings in a vast and complicated situation.

Black Prince sheered off to get out of Beatty's way, while Beatty, unable to tell just what part of the Grand Fleet he had encountered, pressed east, fighting Hipper as he went. German shells, passing over Beatty, were falling about *Duke of Edinburgh*, *Black Prince's* neighbour, and almost at once, all along the front of Jellicoe's scouting line, gunfire was heard or seen.

Then, out of the haze, crossing the front from the west, the Grand Fleet saw Beatty's battle-cruisers in full action, belching salvos towards an invisible, distant foe. It was as though a curtain had been lifted. The splashes of enemy salvos sprang up about Beatty's ships, and the livid flashing of enemy guns was visible all along the misty southern horizon. Of enemy ships, nothing could be seen. Steaming furiously in the lee, Beatty's light cruisers barged in among the light cruisers and destroyers of the Grand Fleet's screen, and found themselves so close in front of the British dreadnoughts that, at the risk of collision, they extricated themselves by steering pell-mell down between the columns.

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Beatty, steaming eastward in action, was placing himself squarely across the Grand Fleet's front, shutting out all sight of the enemy in an impenetrable pall of funnel smoke. Caught between the two fleets, he was in no position to manœuvre.

His action, however, had concealed all sight of Jellicoe's approach from Hipper. But it was at this moment that Hood was appearing across the line of Hipper's advance—the deceptive quantity that no one on either side had reckoned with.

Jellicoe, coming south-eastward in a cruising formation, was steaming headlong into action against a fleet he could not see, and found it impossible to ascertain exactly where the enemy was.

Jellicoe's instructions to Beatty had stressed the need for information. The British plan had been to establish early visual contact between the Battle-Cruiser Fleet and the Grand Fleet main body, so that scouting information could be communicated. Yet Beatty, pressed harder than anyone had imagined would be possible, had taken no steps to extend his light cruisers northward for this purpose.

When, at last, *Iron Duke* and *Lion* came within visual signal distance of each other, Jellicoe signalled to Beatty by searchlight: "Where is the enemy Battle Fleet?"

The time was 6.02. Hood's appearance in front of Hipper had just disabled the *Wiesbaden* and turned back the German vanguard. Neither Jellicoe nor Beatty knew this, as none of Hood's forces reported their contact.

Admiral Beatty, crossing before the Grand Fleet formation, answered Jellicoe's question, but the answer was enigmatic: "Enemy battle-cruisers bear south-east."

This response, which failed to give the information asked for, further introduced such a conflict with intelligence just received from *Southampton*, that Jellicoe repeated the question to Beatty: "Where is the enemy Battle Fleet?"

The decision Jellicoe must now make was not only the most important of his lifetime, but one of colossal significance to world destinies. But the admiral, calm, methodical and deliberate as though he were solving a problem in mathematics, painstakingly

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considered the next move, unruffled by external factors. Every aspect of the situation was being weighed in the Commander-in-Chief's mind; he would move when he was ready, at the proper moment, and when he moved, his action must be the right one. There must be no mistake.

As the repetition of the inquiry reached the *Lion*, something unexpected had occurred. Hipper, hard-pressed by Beatty and meeting his scouts as they ran back before Hood, had decided on the simultaneous turn to withdraw to the German main body. In this manœuvre, his ships had suddenly vanished from Beatty's sight into the mist—Beatty could see nothing of the enemy at all. There was a hush. The gunfire of the British battle-cruisers stilled.

Beatty, searching the southern horizon with his binoculars, delayed answering Jellicoe's second signal, expecting at any moment to have definite information.

Jellicoe waited.

The day was drawing to a close in a gloom produced by the hundreds of tons of coal burned by the fleets—a gloom like that over a factory area in the late afternoon.

Should the Grand Fleet's deployment be on the right wing? Jellicoe had thought so at first—it seemed nearest to the enemy. But with every moment it seemed less favourable; it would bring the battle-lines within immediate torpedo range of each other; it would place his weakest squadrons opposite the strongest of the enemy.

No, he decided. Not the right wing. And echoing the soundness of his reasoning, the enemy later commented in the German Official Naval War History: "One must concede that a deployment on the right wing would have placed the Grand Fleet in a situation which Germany could only have desired."

Should it be on the centre?

No, not that complex manœuvre straight ahead into the uncertainty and the gloom.

There was only one choice—the left wing—to take the fight easterly, in the belief that the invisible enemy line was paralleling Beatty's course.

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Five minutes had passed, and at that instant Jellicoe's decision was verified.

Hipper's movement of retirement had been a short one. Almost at once he had come within sight of the High Sea Fleet's leading battleships, and had swung his ships round once more to resume the German advance.

As he did so, he emerged from the mist and Beatty caught sight of him.

More—behind Hipper, Beatty distinguished for a moment, clear and unmistakable, the leading dreadnoughts of the High Sea Fleet's main body.

At 6.14 *Lion's* signal-searchlight flashed to the *Iron Duke*: "Have sighted enemy Battle Fleet, bearing south-south-west."

At 6.15 Jellicoe, sure and certain of his tactics, made the signal which the fleet had awaited for a breathless quarter of an hour:

"Deploy upon the left-wing column; course south-east-by-east."

A masterly decision, it determined the outcome of the battle and the outcome of the war. It deployed the Grand Fleet squarely across the tip of the approaching enemy—the manœuvre called "Crossing the T"—one desirable above all others in fleet action because it opposes maximum strength to the enemy's weakest point.

CHAPTER XXVII

"WINDY CORNER"

NOW began the spectacle of the Grand Fleet's deployment. The complex ship handling rested upon the skill and seamanship of the one hundred and forty-four captains, upon the cool nerves and steady obedience of the helmsmen, the navigators, the engineers at their throttles, the signal personnel. Even for Britain a manœuvre involving so many ships at full speed was exceptional—manœuvres of such magnitude had been made few times in the course of all history. And in every way this deployment of the Grand Fleet proved to be the most remarkable single evolution of ships the seas had ever seen.

The south-easterly progress of the formation had brought Britain's dreadnoughts to a point only 14,000 yards from the enemy line. Scheer was pressing resolutely on. And now at last the main bodies of the two navies came within dim, uncertain sight of each other, even as the Grand Fleet was forming for battle.

Over in the German column, the blunting of the tip as Hipper turned and swept back, had been overcome. Hipper had found the leading Third Squadron slowed down from its mad burst of speed; the gaps in the line were being somewhat closed up, and the heavy dreadnoughts were coming through the grey uneasy sea like titanic monsters, their turrets all trained out in the direction of the invisible enemy, waiting to strike, the guns elevated high and the decks bare for action.

Hipper had wheeled in good order to take his place at the line's head, and, one long irregular column, the twenty-seven German battleships and battle-cruisers had steered north-east into the unknown. Almost as Hipper wheeled, the vague shapes

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of the Grand Fleet's battleships became visible—only half-identified—and the nearer shapes of Beatty's battle-cruisers—and at these targets, flashes of lurid German gunfire spat out with a rumble like thunder along half the length of the German line.

The Grand Fleet deployed under fire—a sight of maritime glory, ships whose names were like a pageant of Britain's past, whose massive shapes were the product of her soil and industry, whose crews were the blood and bone of her seafarers. Proud and stately, each grey dreadnought came into her place in the line in turn, and wheeled, her battle-flags whipping from her trucks, snowy white flags with the livid red cross of St. George and the bright British union. At the head of the line, *King George V*, *Ajax*, *Centurion*, *Erin*, *Orion*, *Monarch*, *Conqueror* and *Thunderer*. In the centre, *Iron Duke*, *Royal Oak*, *Superb*, *Canada*, *Benbow*, *Bellerophon*, *Temeraire* and *Vanguard*. At the rear, *Colossus*, *Collingwood*, *Neptune*, *St. Vincent*, *Marlborough*, *Revenge*, *Hercules* and *Agincourt*.

Each of those ancient names was 25,000-tons of steel welded into a modern ship. A thousand men welded into a crew. Each ship had a personality, an individuality, fusion of all the human labour that had gone into her, the courage and determination of the officers and men within her.

It was on the rear portion of the deploying British line that the enemy fire fell, and it was this portion that displayed the most magnificent seamanship during the deployment. Particularly the turning point of the starboard wing column lay under concentrated fire, at the spot christened "Windy Corner."

First two, then four, then six, and eight, nine British battleships began to respond to the fire, joining the cannonade as they wheeled into the battle-line. The High Sea Fleet, appearing and disappearing into the gloom seven miles away, was the target—ships seen by the gunners for the first time. Battle had been joined, and the range was only fourteen thousand yards.

It was impossible to manœuvre the twenty-four British dreadnoughts as though upon parade. Only extraordinary tactical skill could keep them in column, once they had formed.

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There was a little over a ship's-length of water between the stern of each vessel and the bow of the dreadnought that followed her, and as the line formed it surged up upon itself. It took cool, intensely alert handling of helm and engines to prevent collisions and maintain position; speed had been decreased to fifteen knots, and at the rear of the line the engines were slowed to twelve knots and ten.

The captains and navigating personnel were in the armoured conning-towers, from which they could see out through narrow slits and periscopes sticking up through the roofs. In these restricted stations, surrounded by voice-tubes, telephones and pneumatic tubes leading down into the ship, they exercised command.

While the dreadnoughts were deploying, a host of simultaneous, independent dramas played themselves out between the battle-lines—dramas so spectacular that they formed a vivid note in the tremendous, raging symphony of war. They took place within sight of both fleets and became indelible high-lights of the moment.

In the Grand Fleet's vanguard, Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Arbuthnot, with the armoured cruisers *Defence* and *Warrior*, had come within sight of the crippled *Wiesbaden* just after her encounter with Hood. In the distance she appeared whole and sound; she was still steaming slowly, and seemed in a position in which she could fire torpedoes at the oncoming Grand Fleet. The admiral determined to close and destroy her.

Summoning all the speed possible from the two old armoured cruisers, Arbuthnot steamed forward towards the German. Threatening to run them down, Beatty's battle-cruisers were approaching from the west in full array, firing as they came. *Defence* and *Warrior* cut close past *Lion's* bows and opened fire on the *Wiesbaden*.

The latter was in pitiable state. Her stokers had drawn their fires and come up out of their stoke-holds, and she was now drifting. Under the new assault her men fled across the open

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decks, taking cover behind anything that offered protection. A few guns were still able to shoot, but most of her battery had been silenced and the corpses of the crews lay about the deck. Shell after shell from *Defence* and *Warrior* burst upon the German ship and swept her with metal; running stokers were struck down in mid-stride, and a great number of men sprang over the side, only to drown.

Then *Defence* and *Warrior*, sweeping south-west, found themselves close before Hipper's battle-cruisers at the head of the German line. Hipper had set his course for the *Wiesbaden*, hoping to relieve her and rescue her people.

A storm of German turret fire concentrated on the British armoured cruisers at short range, about 7,000 yards. They answered as best they could, but they had no defences against it, either in speed, armour, or return gun-power.

Three German turret salvos straddled *Defence*—the first "over," the second "short" . . . the third hit her full with a terrific crash. Again the same process was repeated—a salvo over, a salvo short . . . a third which hit her with a resounding impact.

In full view of the deploying Grand Fleet she blew up with the loss of Sir Robert Arbuthnot and every man on board—a swelling cloud of smoke, a concussive explosion as her magazines rent her to extinction with incredible violence.

When the call came for the Grand Fleet to go to sea, just twenty-four hours earlier, Arbuthnot had been playing tennis with Lady Jellicoe, ashore at Cromarty. He had put down his racket and turned to war, and now, with all his company, he was dead.

Warrior, close astern, had every anticipation of the same fate, but went on firing her guns dauntlessly, zig-zagging in an attempt to reach safety past the entire German line. A shell beat through her side, crashed into the port engine-room, penetrated the starboard engine-room and burst, flinging its steel straight down through the double-bottoms, so that the sea bubbled up into her like a spouting geyser. The engine-

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rooms, flooding with water, were full of live steam from rent steam-pipes, and just outside the doors fires were raging—a few men climbed up to safety through a jagged shell-hole, many were drowned and scalded to death, while the untended engines went on running with their cranks swirling in the flood of rising salt water.

Simultaneously the destroyer *Onslow*, a ship of Beatty's forces, had seen the *Wiesbaden*, had likewise gone forward to attack her—and likewise been caught before the oncoming German battle-cruisers. Half her boilers shot useless, able to steam at only ten knots, she chose not to run but to steer closer to the advancing enemy and fire her remaining torpedoes. . . . She coolly launched one towards the German battle-cruisers, one at the *Wiesbaden* (a hit), and two at the High Sea Fleet. Then, crippled as she was, she made off under fire towards the British line and lived to be taken in tow and reach port.

But *Warrior* seemed doomed. Many men watched her struggling progress down between the fleets through a cruel hail of German gunfire. By the time she was abreast the rear of the British line, she had received fifteen major-calibre hits and six from secondary-batteries, and had had to draw her fires and stop her engines.

Here she met great good fortune.

Coming up towards the rear of the Grand Fleet was Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas with the Fifth Battle Squadron. His proper place, as fast wing unit, was in the van of Jellicoe's deployment, but he had decided that it was impossible to cross the entire fleet front and reach that station, and was steering to attach himself to the rear.

German fire had just re-opened on Evan-Thomas's squadron as the fleets drew within sight of each other. *Kaiserin*, the seventh battleship of the German main body, had just struck *Warspite*, third of Evan-Thomas's ships, with a hit that temporarily put *Warspite's* steering gear out of commission. With jammed helm the dreadnought was beginning an involuntary sheer out to starboard towards the German line. Her captain

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called for full speed, to force her round through a complete circle as quickly as possible and bring her back into her own formation. Even so, her swing had taken her within ten thousand yards of the enemy column and she had become the target for seven German ships.

But her mad career distracted the German attention from the struggling *Warrior*, which managed to escape into the lee behind her, all but crippled. One ship's misfortune was another's salvation.

Eleven times in rapid succession *Warspite* was struck before her steering gear was finally got under control. As she sought to rejoin her squadron she was still fully capable of fighting, but she discovered that when she steamed at more than sixteen knots water poured into her engine-rooms from shell-holes through her side, aft. She reported her situation to Evan-Thomas and received orders to leave the battle and make her way alone to Rosyth for repairs.

Shortly afterwards the drifting *Warrior* was sighted by the seaplane-carrier *Engadine*, which took the armoured cruiser in tow for English waters.

The last of the adventures during the deployment took place at the head of the line, where the the destroyer *Acasta*—one of Hood's unit—having been waved away from the sinking *Shark*, found herself in front of the approaching German battle-cruisers in position for an attack. She was another of the British destroyers which made a single-handed essay against gigantic odds. In the face of heavy fire she ran within four thousand yards of the *Lützow* to launch a torpedo, and then met the inevitable bursting shells which destroyed her rudder, riddled her steam pipes and left her to limp away until she came to a stop close to the head of the British line, a courageous picture of war, with her men cheering madly as dreadnought after dreadnought of the Grand Fleet swept by.

CHAPTER XXVIII

RETREAT

THREE simultaneous actions had developed between the main fleets, involving the entire length of the deploying British line, and half the length of the German column. Scheer, pressing up to the north-east and east, was still unable to tell what was happening at the head of his great force as it steered into the massive concentration of British ships. His flagship was the thirteenth vessel in the German column—so far back that of the 105 fresh enemy ships sprung up to confront him, he could see only *Defence* and *Warrior* on their ill-fated excursions between the lines.

For the rest, he was reduced to guesses. The horizon to the north, and as far away to the north-east as he could see, was alive with the flashes of guns, increasing in number every minute. What this signified—beyond the obvious fact that Beatty had met reinforcements—was uncertain; it might mean twenty enemy ships; it might mean forty—it might mean a squadron; it might mean the Grand Fleet. But still Scheer clung to the conviction that Jellicoe was not at sea, and found it impossible to visualize the true situation.

At the tip of the German line, the immediate objective was the *Wiesbaden*, which could be seen helpless up ahead in the north-east. Hipper, leading the advance, was steering in this direction, carrying on his running fight with Beatty's battle-cruisers.

Behind Hipper, following him, the four or five leading German dreadnoughts had sighted the deploying British battle-ships in the north, and opened fire without knowing that their target was "Windy Corner," the tail end of the deploying Grand Fleet.

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The four or five German dreadnoughts behind these—among them the Fleet Flagship—had re-sighted Evan-Thomas's Fifth Battle Squadron, and had been joined by two others in their brief burst of intensive fire upon the *Warspite* as she sheered out of line.

The remaining ships of the German Battle-Fleet were steaming up behind, following after the leaders without being able to see anything of what was going on ahead.

Until 6.20—five minutes after Jellicoe's signal deploying the Grand Fleet—the German advance was unchecked. Then, with increasing fury, the British concentration fell upon it.

For coincidence still favoured Britain. In the van, Hood had been coming up from the southward ever since his gun-fire had crippled *Wiesbaden*. He now sighted Beatty and simultaneously sighted Hipper, and added the salvos of his three fresh battle-cruisers to the pressure on the German tip.

The unexpected support sent a wave of encouragement through Beatty's ships, while the German van, still unable to identify or see the new antagonist, received the impression that they had encountered strong numbers—the "battleships" reported by the retiring light craft twenty minutes ago. Hood was bringing three ships into play—the German battle-cruisers believed they were being attacked by eight or ten dreadnoughts, the additional fire of twenty-four 12-inch guns seeming to be that of eighty 13.5- or 15-inch weapons.

Hood took station ahead of Beatty, wheeling and steering into place in a beautiful manoeuvre. Beatty followed with a last burst of 26 knots speed in the final stage of his passage across the Grand Fleet front, and Britain's concentration of battle-cruisers in the van was complete.

The seven British battle-cruisers found *Lützow* the nearest and best target. She was leading the German squadron. From 6.26 on Hipper's flagship received hit after hit, which riddled her forward part, reduced her bows and forecastle to a waste of

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crumpled, battered metal—her ability to stay afloat was a tribute to her design and construction.

Under the assault, which threatened to send his ship to the bottom, Hipper gave up the attempt to reach *Wiesbaden* and sheered away to starboard, giving ground to open the range. The new course was south-east; the other German battle-cruisers followed. *Derfflinger* was being struck. The German return fire was weak—the visibility was entirely in favour of the British. Beatty and Hood were merged into smoky gloom, while Hipper stood out with relative distinctness.

For the second time the German battle-cruiser thrust had been blunted and forced to turn aside.

Meantime, just astern, the fight between the leading German dreadnoughts and the British at "Windy Corner" had grown in intensity until a tremendous onslaught of British steel was falling about the German ships. Nine, ten, and then twelve vessels had come into the line against the three or four Germans. This was the crux of the situation. With every minute, more of Jellicoe's dreadnoughts were joining the British column and adding their gun-fire to the total, while the German line was unable to bring additional guns to bear.

The brunt of it was falling upon *König*, the leading German battleship, as she thrust forward out of the mist and smoke. Quivering under the detonations, she burst into flames forward; her after-part was swept by a storm of metal and enveloped in clouds of gas, and she listed heavily. She was being fired on by *Agincourt*, *Bellerophon*, *Conqueror*, *Thunderer*, *Hercules*, *Colossus*, *Benbow*, *Iron Duke*, *Orion*, *Monarch*, *Royal Oak* and *Revenge*. Her rear-admiral could see the German battle-cruisers, under equally heavy fire, just ahead of him, sheering away to the south-east, and he followed after them.

It had all happened with stunning suddenness, within five minutes, as though the navies of the world had risen out of the sea to check the High Sea Fleet's advance. The heavy rumble of battle grew in magnitude with each second—the arrival of salvos, the slow hissing jets of shell splashes. It was

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that rare spectacle—sea-power in action. Scheer's line was being bent at right-angles, and the turning-point—the point through which ship after ship must pass—lay under the heaviest concentration of enemy fire.

At this moment of complete surprise, as he became aware of the growing confusion ahead of his flagship, Scheer received a dispatch from the Fifth Destroyer Flotilla. According to statements made by prisoners from the destroyer *Nomad*, there were sixty British dreadnoughts in the vicinity, among them twenty new battleships and six battle-cruisers.

Could the entire British Grand Fleet be abroad after all?

Without hesitation the German admiral decided upon a general retiring movement to gain time, and made the signal: "*Gefechtskehrtwendung nach Steuerbord!*" It was 6.36 p.m.

Ships about, 180 degrees, to starboard!

The situation was unusual and dangerous. The manœuvre was equally so—difficult in calm waters, a hundred times more difficult in battle. It meant the simultaneous turn of every vessel in the line, the reversal of the course, so that the eight-mile column steered back through the waters it had just traversed. The danger of collision would be acute, and with it came the risk that the line would be thrown into confusion.

But Scheer trusted his ships.

The British saw the German vessels begin the turn—a moment later the enemy column had faded from view, as though they had entered heavier mist, and it was impossible to say what had become of them.

The tremendous concentration of British gun-fire had lasted only a few short minutes. It slowly died away for want of targets. As *König* disappeared she was enveloped in such a cloud of flame and smoke that she appeared to be sinking.

Screened behind the thickness, the massive German column turned farther and farther in perfect, ponderous, simultaneous evolution, six points, eight points, twelve points, sixteen points about—until the ships had reached the opposite course and were

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withdrawing to the south-west, extricating themselves from the peril which had threatened to annihilate them.

Scheer had never known, far less seen, exactly what he faced. The flash of gun-fire, the heavy assault of shell-fire, the wavering at the head of his line, the message of warning from the Fifth Flotilla, had stirred all his caution. As rapidly as he had rushed into danger, he was withdrawing.

The British had never seen more than three or four German battleships, now apparently swallowed up in mist; unconscious of Scheer's manoeuvre, they waited for the enemy to reappear.

But at the moment of retreat the German battle-cruisers at last caught sight of the British van. At 6.30, the thick patches of mist and smoke, which had enveloped the enemy, rifted apart and revealed the tip of the Grand Fleet, with Hood's *Invincible* leading. She stood forth distinctly, only 10,000 yards away, and *Lützow* and *Derfflinger*, whose gunnery officers had been vainly seeking a target, immediately opened fire on her.

She replied with spirit. Hood, standing on her upper bridge, called up the voice-tube to the gunnery officer in the foretop the cheerful, encouraging words: "Keep it up as rapidly as you can! Every shot is a hit!"

An instant later, *Lützow's* third salvo struck the British battle-cruiser amidships, between her waist turrets, and *Invincible* was suddenly enveloped in a sheet of seething flame from another of the fatal British magazine explosions—repetition of the catastrophes which had destroyed *Indefatigable*, *Queen Mary* and *Defence*.

As she was blown in two, the same monstrous belch of smoke rose above her stricken hull that had been the funeral pyre of three others. Rear-Admiral Hood went down with her—only six of her company of 1,034 escaped with their lives, one of them the gunnery officer in the foretop to whom Hood had spoken his last words. Of *Invincible*, "Mother of all battle-cruisers," the only thing left to sight was the bow and the stern, sticking up

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gaunt and naked out of the sea to mark the shallow spot where she had gone down. The little handful of survivors was rescued by the destroyer *Badger*.

At the moment of *Invincible's* destruction, Admiral Hipper was turning the German battle-cruisers away from the enemy to follow after the retiring High Sea Fleet.

Lützow, his flagship, had received such injuries that she was struggling to stay afloat, and had all but lost her power to steam—she and *Invincible* had done for each other. Word was brought to Hipper that she was sinking by the head and would have to leave the line. She steered south-west away from the others, seeking to escape the British salvos which followed after her. At 6.37 Hipper declared her "out of action" and ordered her to steer for Wilhelmshaven. A destroyer was signalled to come alongside to transfer the admiral and his staff to another battle-cruiser; in the interim the *Derfflinger's* captain assumed command of the squadron.

A little before seven o'clock Hipper, with a hand-clasp more eloquent than words, bade farewell to Captain Harder of the *Lützow*, and left the flagship, never to see her again.

The squadron was out of sight. Reduced to four ships, it had only two of any fighting value, and was falling back westerly in line-abreast, seeking to re-form itself as it made after Scheer's retreat. *Seydlitz*, listed and down by the head, was being steered by emergency gear. *Von der Tann* had not been able to get either of her jammed turrets back into action, and had not fired a heavy gun for over an hour. *Derfflinger* was forced to stop her engines for a time, while a party of riggers went out to cut away her torn steel torpedo-net, which threatened to foul the screws; her wireless had been destroyed, every signal halyard had either been burned or blown away; her searchlights were twisted wreckage—the only way her captain could communicate with the ships now under his command was to send a man into an exposed position with a pair of semaphore flags.

RETREAT

By 6.45 the High Sea Fleet was in full retreat to the south-westward and out of sight of the enemy, steering away from the British line.

Apart from the injuries to the battle-cruisers and to the *König*, the dreadnought *Markgraf* reported that she had had to stop her port engine owing to shell damage, and was having difficulty in maintaining her place in the column. *König* was fighting fires, but holding her own. German destroyers were laying a thick impenetrable smoke-screen to cover the movement.

In this general protection which spread about the German withdrawal, the destroyer *V-48* was caught before the British guns, riddled, and left in a sinking position.

So far the fleet action had lasted only twenty minutes. It had been abruptly broken off as the German fortunes, high during the day, encountered the threat of overwhelming defeat.

CHAPTER XXIX

PURSUIT

IN two hours and a half it would be dark.

Two hours and a half of diminishing daylight, even under favourable conditions, was insufficient time for the fighting of a decisive action which would leave one fleet or the other the sole survivor of the field. For decisive victory in a major naval action there are two essentials—time, and clear weather.

Such an action could take place only next day, beginning at early daylight and lasting through the hours. Whatever further fighting was done before nightfall, whichever side took the aggressive, the fleets would be faced with the problem of riding through the night, fending off night torpedo attacks, and resuming the engagement at dawn.

Both Admiral Jellicoe and Admiral Scheer were conscious of this fact in all their decisions from now onward.

The German appearance and disappearance had taken place before the British deployment was fully completed. Only at 6.45 was Jellicoe's massive evolution finished, with all his ships on a south-easterly course. The entire sequence of confused events had been part of a single manœuvre. Now thirty-three British capital ships were formed into one unbroken column eleven miles long, the battle-cruisers at the tip, then the twenty-four dreadnoughts of the Grand Fleet proper, and at the rear the three dreadnoughts of the Fifth Battle Squadron. The innumerable light cruisers and destroyers had taken up their battle and scouting positions at van and rear.

At 6.50 the gun-fire had completely died away—the guns were lifted expectantly, the crews ready for the continuation of the conflict. There was no enemy in sight.

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Impossible to realize that the German fleet, its rear only 16,000 yards distant, was steaming directly away to the south-west.

But already, at the British rear, the Second Light Cruiser Squadron, led by Commodore Goodenough in the *Southampton*, had sensed an unusual enemy movement, and was sallying in the direction in which the Germans had last been seen, in quest of information. *Southampton* had distinguished herself for her scouting thus far during the day—most of the information Jellicoe had received had come from her; she was to continue her magnificent record.

And at the line's tip, the battle-cruisers were turning to a southerly course which Beatty felt would close the range. Beatty believed that the German battle-cruisers, somewhere in the gloom, were steaming south—a belief caused by a glimpse of the crippled *Lützow* as she limped off. He would utilize the lull to re-form his squadrons for the fighting which he expected would be resumed at any moment.

The loss of *Invincible* had left *Inflexible* and *Indomitable* without an admiral at the tip of the column. Beatty ordered these two to circle back and take position astern of the *New Zealand*, so that he himself, with the *Lion*, would be at the line's head.

But as this manœuvre was being carried out, *Lion* began a sudden turn to starboard. Beatty had drawn more than four miles ahead of the fleet and the turn would bring him back within closer touch with the battleships. Owing to a gyro-compass failure the helmsman, unaware that he was following a false guide, turned more than was intended and rather than head back in the old direction at once, which might throw the line into confusion, the flagship was allowed to complete the circle.

For nearly ten minutes the British battle-cruisers were involved in re-forming movements which made it impossible for them to take any part in searching for the retreating Germans. At this crucial moment, the scouting forces at the head of the British line were ineffectual.

Meantime Jellicoe had been considering the situation.

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It had not been possible to form an opinion, on board the *Iron Duke*, as to the formation of the enemy fleet. Jellicoe himself had seen only *König* and one or two other ships of the enemy main body, which had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. From the glimpses he had had, the admiral had concluded that they were on a course east, and it had been obvious that *König* was being heavily hit. Putting two and two together, he decided that the enemy had turned away under the pressure, and with equal promptness decided to close after him and continue the pressure.

What direction had the enemy's movement taken?

There were two possibilities. Either Jellicoe could assume that the Germans had reversed their course and were steering westward in precipitate retreat—or that their line had bent southward towards Wilhelmshaven, in which case, momentarily lost in the mist, they would be making their way towards home in the shortest possible direction.

The first possibility, the retreat westward, seemed the least likely, both because of the difficulty of the manoeuvre and because it led towards the open sea. It was not impossible that the German admiral had made such a movement, particularly if he hoped to lure the enemy into following him into mine or torpedo traps. But it did not seem probable.

The second alternative, the direct movement towards Wilhelmshaven on a southerly course, appeared the most natural step for a German admiral to take if surprised by an enemy coming down from the northward. Jellicoe could not realize that Scheer had placed the British main body not in the north, but in the east, where Hood had appeared.

In any event, there was one strategic position which, if Jellicoe could reach it, would dictate not only the course, but the result of all future fighting, whether it took place now, or during the night, or in the morning. That was the position across Scheer's line of retreat—the point between the High Sea Fleet and the German base.

At 6.50, only a minute or two after the enemy had vanished

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and gun-fire had ceased, Jellicoe signalled the fleet to turn four points—45°—to starboard by divisions, and steer a course due south. This should both close the range and move to cut off the enemy's escape.

Decisions were being reached with extraordinary promptness and as quickly converted into action.

At the same time Jellicoe sent a wireless message to Admiral Beatty, who was now out of sight from the *Iron Duke*, notifying him that the British Battle Fleet's course was south.

The six divisions of dreadnoughts followed their leaders to the new course. The fleet was no longer in one long column, but in echelon, the divisions blanketing one another as their parallel lines steered south.

Suddenly there was a commotion towards the rear. Torpedo tracks had been sighted, and periscopes were reported.

Revenge, sixth from the end, felt a sudden shock—the dull bump of a torpedo which failed to explode against her hull. Immediately afterwards *Marlborough*, just in front of her, experienced a heavy explosion under the bridge—her bottom was torn open and water flooded into her coal bunkers, putting her forward stoke-holds out of commission. Her injuries were localized; the flooding was got under control; her pumps brought her back on an even keel, and she held her place in the line.

Had the torpedoes come from one of the submarines which everyone was sure had accompanied the High Sea Fleet? Or had they been fired from the wreck of the *Wiesbaden*, or of *V-48*, lying abreast the British line? From half a dozen ships gun-fire crashed out against the drifting German hulks. *Marlborough's* third or fourth salvo crashed into *Wiesbaden*, whose side was rent open to the waterline, while two of her funnels went overboard. It seemed incredible that any living creature could survive after the punishment she had endured during the past hour—yet of her crew of 500 there were 25 or 30 terrified men still alive, cowering behind anything that offered shelter.

The wreck of *V-48* vanished in the burst of a heavy salvo from *Colossus*.

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Far in the van, Beatty emerged from his gyratory manœuvres at 7.0 o'clock, and likewise set a southerly course, while the Fifth Battle Squadron was following in behind the fleet and the host of light cruisers and destroyers were adjusting themselves to the new disposition. The ships heaved and rolled to the easy swell, surging forward, their grey shapes mammoth against the background of sea and smoky sky.

CHAPTER XXX

ATTACK

SCHeer had never imagined that the British would allow him to retreat without pursuit. He had expected the enemy to take up a direct chase at once, hammer and tongs, so that he would have to fight his way.

There must be some reason why Britain had failed to follow him.

As he received reports, he discovered that he had come out of the hot quarter of an hour very well. *König's* blazing fires died down as the hoses played into them. The battle-cruisers seemed to be holding their own—there was still a lot of action left in them, even though *Lützow* had fallen out of the formation.

But Scheer had seen two enemy ships blow up before his eyes during the brief encounter, and felt certain that a third—*Warspite*—was in a sinking condition.

Perhaps other British ships had gone down. Perhaps victory had been his at the moment he had turned away—perhaps, in taking punishment, he had delivered five-fold what he had received.

He doubted, suddenly, whether the full strength of the Grand Fleet had been arrayed against him. No German had seen the British line in its entirety. Hasty conclusions had been drawn from the flashing of distant guns, the splashes of enemy salvos, the statements of prisoners—conclusions that seemed, on second thought, ill-founded.

The enemy, who was not pursuing him, must have suffered too heavily to follow, or be too weak to follow.

Was Scheer repeating the fatal mistake Admiral von Ingenohl had made in 1914—withdrawing the full strength of the High

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Sea Fleet from an inferior detachment of British ships? Was he another of the Commanders-in-Chief who had allowed Britain's prestige to take the place of her fleet? Held the fate of Germany in the hollow of his hand—to fling it away?

Abruptly Admiral Scheer decided to return to the conflict he had so shortly broken off—to turn back without re-forming his fleet. He would attack head on with all his battleships, with the battle-cruisers, simultaneously sending his destroyers to the attack—throw every weapon he could bring to bear into the scale. There still remained over an hour before sunset. At 6.45 *Moltke* had reported that the van of the enemy line bore east-by-south.

Scheer might find on closer acquaintance that his own forces were present in considerably greater numbers than his antagonists'. He might surprise the enemy and throw him into confusion. He might destroy further British capital ships and wrest for himself the supremacy of the North Sea and the superiority in to-morrow's battle. His boldness might disturb all the British admiral's dispositions for the night. If the British line had moved far enough south, Scheer might cross the rear of the enemy formation and secure the tactical advantage in the east, dealing destruction as he went, to recover at one stroke the position with the superior visibility and the more open line of retreat towards Wilhelmshaven. Last, he might relieve the *Wiesbaden* and rescue her crew.

And if he did not make this attack?

Then there existed the possibility that Britain would attack and drive him west, scatter him through the night—and that his line of retreat towards Wilhelmshaven would be definitely severed. If the entire enemy fleet was not present now, it was probably at sea and would be brought up before morning. . . .

To remain inactive was the defeatist course—it flung away all positive hope of improving the German situation.

For the second time during the day Scheer threw away the caution which had characterized his handling of the High Sea Fleet, led on by the belief that if he turned back to fight he might

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secure an advantage which would be the turning-point of the war. Without reconnaissance, without knowing the enemy strength, or where he lay, or what course he was steering, defying every principle of sound strategy, staking all upon courage and determination, he issued the command: "Ships-about 180° to starboard."

At 6.55 the signal "*Gefechtskehrtwendung nach Steuerbord!*" flew from the flagship. The German admiral had closed his line compactly together; the gaps that had separated his battle-ship divisions had vanished. Now he proposed to repeat the simultaneous turn, to resume exactly the order he had followed previously, and steer back over exactly the same course, literally through the same water.

The signal was executed, and the fleet began to turn.

It was the crowning moment of Germany's naval aspirations, her final bid for supremacy. If she did not vanquish Britain now, she would never become mistress of the seas, would never wrest the trident into her fist. It was the Imperial Navy, obeying the command to do battle—the men from Bavaria and Pomerania, Saxony and East Prussia, stokers from the factory cities, seamen who had grown up in Baltic fishing villages and the water-front streets of Stettin, Hamburg, Bremen. The ships turned by divisions from the rear, each division going ships-about.

König, Grosser Kurfürst, Markgraf, Kronprinz, dreadnoughts of 1914 and 1915. After them *Kaiser, Prinzregent Luitpold* and *Kaiserin*, completing Squadron III. Then *Friedrich der Grosse*, the Fleet Flagship, followed by the eight older dreadnoughts—*Ostfriesland, Thuringen, Helgoland, Oldenburg, Posen, Rheinland, Nassau* and *Westfalen*, with the six pre-dreadnoughts, *Deutschland, Pommern, Schlesien, Schleswig-Holstein, Hessen* and *Hannover* in the rear.

By seven o'clock, on a course north-east-by-east, the twenty-two vessels were moving in at 15 knots, and Scheer had ordered destroyers to be sent to the *Wiesbaden*, to attempt the rescue of her survivors. The battle-cruisers were taking their place at

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the head of the long column. At approximately the same moment, ten miles in front of the leading German ship, the Grand Fleet was completing Jellicoe's order to assume a southerly course.

And now the German thrust was discovered. All this time Commodore Goodenough, who had left the rear of the British line to reconnoitre with his *Southampton* and the Second Light Cruiser Squadron, had been venturing towards the vanished foe to ascertain their movements.

No sooner had the German battleships completed their evolution and straightened out on the new course than they became aware of British light cruisers to the northward. At the tip of the German column the German battle-cruisers were just swinging into place, *Derfflinger* leading, followed by *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, and *Von der Tann*.

At 7.5 six German dreadnoughts opened fire on the *Southampton* at long range, and for the second time Goodenough and his squadron were enveloped in a storm of German projectiles and turned, zig-zagging, away from the danger. But they had already accomplished their purpose—before the Germans had begun to fire, Goodenough had sent wireless information to Jellicoe that the enemy Battle Fleet lay south-south-west from *Southampton*, and was steering an easterly course.

Simultaneously Admiral Beatty reported from the British van that he saw German battle-cruisers to the west.

And now Jellicoe knew the correctness of his tactics.

For the moment, the British admiral steered his ships two points more towards the foe, to hasten the closing of the range. He could not visualize exactly the situation over there behind the smoke and mist; he imagined the High Sea Fleet steaming distantly parallel to him, just out of sight, and that his own range-closing tactics were responsible for the renewal of the contact.

Then, from two portions of the line, submarines and enemy destroyers were reported—the submarines imaginary, the destroyers those which were breaking through toward the *Wiesbaden* and which now came under fire.

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Jellicoe resumed the course south. It was 7.9. He was playing a certain hand. Sooner or later, he *must* meet the enemy.

In both fleets the tension had become very great among the 100,000 men who made up their combined crews—anticipation, the feeling that the decisive instant was just at hand—the entire emotion of war at sea condensed into this dark misty seascape which formed the background for the enormous fleets and behind which so much that was ominous lay concealed.

Suddenly the German thrust appeared. The ships were seen first from the rear of the British line and then by almost all the British dreadnoughts—first one, then two, then three, then four looming battle-cruisers, accompanied by destroyers—then the vague silhouettes of German dreadnoughts.

The Grand Fleet's broadsides spoke, spreading forward as the enemy became visible—long, thunderous rumble of guns, heavy and portentous, rising and falling in a beat of sound like the booming of titanic surf, a sound that spoke of battle, of death and fate, of the histories of nations and the chronicle of man. Above the deep fury of the turrets came the splitting staccato of the secondary guns firing sharp salvos at the German torpedo-craft.

No venture had ever been more futile than this of Scheer's. His leading ships were full before the British centre as they came within sight, and the Grand Fleet was only 10,000 yards away. For the second time the German T was fully crossed—Scheer's hope of securing an advantage had been a delusion.

Neptune and *St. Vincent* opened against *Derfflinger* and *Moltke*. *Revenge* joined in against *Derfflinger*, and almost at once saw flames shoot out above the German battle-cruiser. *Agincourt* chose one of the four German battleships which she could just see coming out of the haze; at 7.10 the Fifth Battle Squadron added its 15-inch guns, when *Valiant*, *Barham* and *Malaya* opened fire against battleships and battle-cruisers. *Marlborough*, despite her recent torpedo injury, fired fourteen salvos

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in six minutes at a ship of the *König* class—after the sixth salvo she could see clouds of smoke and steam pouring out of the enemy, and the last three salvos sent hits through the side and under the bridge. *Hercules* was aiming at *Seydlitz*. Then *Iron Duke* joined the cannonade, first at a German battleship and then at a battle-cruiser.

To this fire the ships of the German van were hardly able to reply for lack of visible targets. The gunners attempted to take ranges and aim at the flashes of British guns, but the German salvos were intermittent and ineffective, and only one British vessel, *Colossus*, was struck, when two shells crashed into her and inflicted superficial damage against armour.

Meantime four German destroyers were making an heroic effort to reach the *Wiesbaden*; the survivors, clustered on the after-deck of the hulk, saw them come out of the German line—but they became targets for the British batteries. To keep on in the face of such steel would have meant complete destruction, and their leader decided to abandon the attempt. The hopes of *Wiesbaden*'s people sank to despair as the four vessels wheeled away, firing torpedoes at the British as they did so, and ran for shelter.

At 7.14 the High Sea Fleet still came forward and the German vessels entered the range of vision of the leading British ships, who added their fire to that of the rear of the line. The crescendo of British artillery rose to its climax. *Orion* and *Monarch* began to shoot, and after them *King George V*, *Centurion*, *Benbow*, *Bellerophon* and *Temeraire*. From the column's head came the salvos of the battle-cruisers as Beatty, sheering in rapidly and increasing his speed, found the targets. *Lion*, *Tiger* and *Princess Royal* shot as though they were undamaged, their weary men determined to avenge the earlier events of the day.

The effect of this massed fire upon the fortunes of the German Fleet was too great to withstand. An impenetrable barrier, hurling destruction, had reared itself again before Scheer's advance. To-day, as ever, the Grand Fleet lay athwart the career of

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Wilhelm II's Imperial Navy—the shells, crashing down, were like an iron barrage into which the Germans ran blindly.

König, the leading battleship, was full of gas and smoke from a hit just abaft her third turret. Within two minutes *Grosser Kurfürst* was hit four times. The fire was reaching far down the German line. *Helgoland*, the fourth ship behind *Friedrich der Grosse*, was struck by a shell that plunged through heavy armour to explode.

In the van, the battle-cruisers were receiving the full and heaviest effect. *Derfflinger's* port side was so battered by hit after hit that her entire battery of 5·9-inch guns in casemates was out of action—jagged crumpled debris and dead men. Then a 15-inch shell crashed full into her after-turret with such force that the heavy machinery and gearing was stripped; the turret jolted wildly around to jam against its stops, while the powder caught fire and killed 74 of the 75-man crew, and the gas spread through the voice-tubes into the ship.

Seydlitz, a wreck forward, was heavily hit near the stern, and through the mist the British gunners caught sight of the distant *Lützow* as she struggled to leave the battle area under an escort of destroyers. Four shells struck her in quick succession; her main battery was quite out of action and she lost the last of her ability to fight—she was only the battered, sinking hulk of a ship.

The fire upon the German battle-cruisers was more than could be faced, and what had happened twice before happened a third time—the head of the line wavered. *Derfflinger* led the four ships south, parallel to the enemy, hoping to bring the guns to bear and engage the head of the British line.

The entire van of the High Sea Fleet faced confusion. The battleships, surrounded by salvos, found themselves surging up upon the battle-cruisers. To escape collision they were forced to slow their engines. The line began to buckle up upon itself; some ships were forced to stop and back full speed; the captains strove to maintain the column and avoid the hopeless entanglement that would complete Germany's predicament and turn the situation into rout.

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There was only one course Scheer could take. He had staked everything on victory and steered a second time into as perilous a position as had ever confronted a naval commander—and this time he was only nine thousand yards from the enemy's guns, with his line already wavering. The only chance of survival lay in a second flight, a withdrawal as he had withdrawn before: "*Gefechtskehrtwendung nach Steuerbord!*"

He felt himself in full view of the enemy. His manœuvre must be detected and its purpose defeated; the confusion of his line must be seen; the enemy must follow him.

At all costs, even at the loss of part of the fleet, he must hold off the enemy pursuit, must sacrifice a portion to protect the whole.

Destroyers were massing on his bow to sally forward with their torpedoes. He would let them go on.

More, he would send the battle-cruisers in a final charge to cover his flight.

At 7.13 the signal flew from *Friedrich der Grosse*: "*Grosse Kreuzer Gefechtswendung rein in den Feind! Ran!*"

("Battle-Cruisers turn toward the enemy! Attack!")

Three minutes later the High Sea Fleet's second retreat began.

All rules of the seafaring art were violated—there was neither sea room nor time to carry out the drilled procedure. Captains turned their ships into flight, steering the heavy dreadnoughts about, conning and jockeying, finding their neighbours so close that collision seemed inevitable, yet just missing collision. *Friedrich der Grosse* circled to port, to give the line room, and still there was not room. *Kaiserin* was squeezed from the crowded column. *Markgraf* headed southward to avoid the area which was being deluged by enemy shells. *Grosser Kurfürst* followed. As the line, under heavy fire, engaged in this manœuvring, the Fifth and Sixth Divisions and the Fleet Flagship, at reduced speed, formed an echelon so close to one another that there was not room to complete the final turn into column, and *König* belched a smoke-screen which she hoped would cover the confusion and hide them from the enemy. The

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ships delivered occasional salvos from their after batteries, and the British fire was doing its last damage. Even now *Kaiser* was struck in her broadside, and a heavy shell thundered down on *Markgraf*.

Meantime the battle-cruisers had increased speed and answered the command to attack with a gallantry and heroism that made this final sally of the heavy vessels of the Imperial German Navy immortal. *Derfflinger* led the four battered ships parallel to the British line so that their broadsides could bear, and there they made their last stand. It lasted only a moment; they had so few guns able to fire that their "attack" was an attack in name only. It was their part to draw the attention of the foe from their retreating mates. And this they did, at the end of four hours of almost uninterrupted fighting, and conduct worthy the highest traditions of the sea and naval warfare.

It was at this moment, as all four of them were in sight of the enemy, that the last and heaviest damage was done them and they received the hits which drained away their final fighting strength. *Von der Tann* was struck at the base of the after conning-tower; the force of the explosion beat down into the starboard engine-room, filling it with gas and smoke, putting out all the lights and sending deadly fragments flying through the room; splinters and concussion penetrated the conning-tower slits, killing or wounding everyone inside.

Derfflinger was caught full in the barbette of one of her two remaining turrets. Seventy of the seventy-five men who had served the guns through the hours, gave their lives as the powder caught fire in another of the devastating moments which had punctuated the day. As the smoke and gas spread down into the engine-rooms, two more shells crashed through the after funnel, one through the forward funnel, another beat out its concussion against the conning-tower. A storm of flying shell fragments, steel splinters, swept across the upper decks, and while all the magazines aft were being flooded, news came that the forward torpedo-room was now full of water, and that the port engine-room and tiller compartment

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were thick with poisonous powder-gas. Within a quarter of an hour the mighty ship had been converted to a shambles of wreckage, the hull relatively intact, but everything above it desolation.

Seydlitz, sinking by the head so that her bow was barely above water, received her last hit aft, where a gun of her after turret was put out of action, and one of her few remaining secondary-battery casemates was laid waste. Only *Moltke* escaped serious damage.

At 7.20 the four ships were sheering away from the enemy, following after their comrades, and a moment later were concealed by the smoke of the attacking German destroyers. At last the British turrets were still. The German battle-cruisers, emerging from inferno, could draw breath and tend their gaping wounds.

The momentary lull which enabled the German ships to withdraw was brought about by the determined attack of the High Sea Fleet's torpedo craft.

Three flotillas—the Third, Sixth and Ninth—carried out the assault. The Sixth and Ninth had sallied out from the German van at 7.15, and the Third at 7.23, just as the German battleships were carrying out their manoeuvre of retreat.

The little ships, plunging out through the area of shell-fire about the dreadnought column, emerged into full view of the Grand Fleet, and saw the Royal Navy of Great Britain, every ship standing out distinctly. It was the first time during the day that German vessels had had a clear sight of the armada which they faced.

The German destroyer crews were resolute men. They intended to advance as closely as possible before launching their torpedoes. They steamed straight towards the enemy line, pennants and flags whipping stiff at thirty knots, and at each lurching moment the opponent became more overwhelming, so that the destroyers felt naked and alone in the consciousness that their own fleet was turning and running behind them.

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The attack was no sooner detected by the British, than a heavy counter-fire began. In the Sixth Flotilla, G-48 was struck, and then G-86. The attacking craft had expected to be met with the fire of secondary batteries, but the British ships were using turrets as well. A monstrous salvo struck the sea in front of the Sixth Flotilla's leader; fragments raked the bridge, wounding the captain and nine men, penetrating the thin plating of the wireless-room, the chart-house, the forward oil-bunker, and damaging one of the torpedo-tubes.

The Sixth Flotilla could press no farther without certain and useless losses; its commander decided to wheel and launch his torpedoes before it was too late. He was abreast the middle of the British line, but had been unable to get closer than 8,000 yards. At 7.20 eleven torpedoes plunged into the water and began their run towards the enemy, while the flotilla, two of its boats limping, steered west after the High Sea Fleet, pouring out a thick smoke-screen.

Then the Ninth Flotilla appeared, coming up in its turn, and in its turn met heavy British fire. V-28 was hit at once, and the flotilla commander saw that he could not penetrate closer. The second flight of German torpedoes took the water at long range. At this moment S-35 was hit amidships and torn apart, sinking at once and taking down not only her own crew, but a group of survivors rescued from V-29. S-51 was struck, and one of her stoke-holds put out of commission; she and V-28, forced to struggle slowly after the retreating flotilla, were grateful for the heavy smoke-screen which masked them. The second wave of German destroyers had been beaten back.

The third wave, penetrating through the manœuvring High Sea Fleet, emerged into the area between the battle lines, but found itself so far to the north that it could not gain attacking position, and could only dimly see the enemy line. Its leader fired one torpedo at maximum range, and then was met by a counter-attack of British destroyers, before which the Germans turned and made their way off.

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Coming at the moment when the High Sea Fleet disappeared for the second time into the mist and haze, the destroyer attacks had drawn the British gunners' entire concentration. From one end of the Grand Fleet to the other, the thunder of gunnery had blazed out.

As the attack came, Jellicoe had been manœuvring the fleet to get it into better formation for its duel with the German battle-line. The echeloned divisions had been firing across their neighbours' bows. The admiral wished to form one long column steering south.

As he issued commands, and his ships were answering them, the first wave of German destroyers appeared, and the British leader watched his gunners beat them back.

The enemy flotilla vanished, but Jellicoe knew that torpedoes must be coming through the water directed at his line.

Experience had shown that the one way of escaping torpedo damage was to turn away from the approaching missiles, so that the ships' sterns, and not their broadsides, were presented as targets.

Now the second flotilla appeared.

Between 7.21 and 7.25 Jellicoe turned the Grand Fleet four points (45°) away from the enemy, until he was temporarily steering south-east. Only Beatty, with the battle-cruisers at the head of the line, was out of the torpedo menace, and continued to steer south-west, firing at and hitting the vanishing German battle-cruisers, with whom he was endeavouring to maintain contact.

At 7.33, the awaited torpedoes were sighted, and the battle-ships began the twisting manœuvres which were their defensive tactics.

Marlborough eluded three torpedoes which came directly towards her, steering first to port, then to starboard, so that they passed close ahead and astern of her. *Revenge* swerved vigorously, and saw one torpedo slip by only ten yards from her bow, while another passed equally close to her stern. *Hercules* and *Agincourt* put their helms over sharply, and sheered sixty

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degrees out of the line. A torpedo was seen to pass between *Iron Duke* and *Thunderer*, while *Colossus* dodged another. *Revenge* swerved away again.

Then the danger was over. None of the German torpedoes, whose launching had caused the crippling of four destroyers and the loss of another, had found a mark.

Jellicoe had followed the fundamental principle of his strategy, which was to assume the defensive against all the enemy's underwater essays, to conserve his ships' superiority for aggressive action with guns and armour. The number of the enemy's torpedoes was limited; they must be avoided when and as they were fired, regardless of the general situation. The aggressive could be resumed when the torpedo danger was over.

But as the Grand Fleet resumed its southerly course, the enemy battle-line had disappeared. This much the German destroyer thrust had accomplished. Britain had been forced to turn away at a time when Admiral Scheer was in dire emergency, when a little more pressure would have cost him serious loss and perhaps the confusion leading to rout.

Between Britain and the Germans lay clouds of dense black smoke belched from the funnels of the retreating German destroyers.

Jellicoe, certain that Scheer had turned westward, was nevertheless unconscious both of the course on which the invisible High Sea Fleet had attacked and of the unusual nature of the German manoeuvre of withdrawal.

One thing he did know. He had gained such a position that his own leading ships were now actually nearer to the German bases than were the Germans'. In these circumstances it mattered little in what direction the enemy had steered—whether due west or south-west. Jellicoe felt certain that his opponent's desire would now be to reach home ports as quickly as possible.

The British admiral would thrust his fleet farther across the German's pathway to Wilhelmshaven. It was to be another

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of the masterly movements by which he forced his enemies to accept his terms, to assume the offensive if they wished to escape—to do that which Jellicoe was sure his antagonist did not want to do.

Beatty had disappeared into the dusk to the south-west. The leading divisions of the Grand Fleet were steering in this direction while the others re-formed on a southerly course. By ten minutes to eight the fleet was in good order, with the leading reconnaissance units steering farther and farther to the westward as they sought to regain contact with the vanished foe.

It was just an hour and a half since Jellicoe had deployed the Grand Fleet for battle. During that time his ships had described an enormous semicircle, over twenty miles in diameter, through the sea.

Starting north of the Germans, they had swept round to the east and were now to the south-east. Within this semicircle the German fleet had been held in check. Three times it had attempted to penetrate the steel barrier, and three times been thrust back. Scheer was still within the semicircle, and was being surrounded by an enemy fleet whose numbers were half again as great as his own, whose gun-power was almost double the Germans, and which was gaining a commanding advantage across the German line of escape. One hundred and forty-three British ships were placing themselves between ninety-three German vessels and the German harbours.

CHAPTER XXXI

TWILIGHT

IN *Friedrich der Grosse*, Scheer had recognized that he would be fortunate if he succeeded in getting the High Sea Fleet back to port without further heavy losses.

As reports came in he learned that *Markgraf* had been hit five times, *Grosser Kurfürst* eight times, and *König* ten times by heavy shells. These three ships, one-fifth of his battleship strength, had suffered the destruction of several guns and had taken a great deal of water inboard, while *Markgraf's* engine breakdown was cause for great anxiety, as it seriously reduced the fleet's speed.

The sally had lasted fifteen minutes. It had cost him the fighting value of his battle-cruisers, the expenditure of almost all the torpedoes of two flotillas, the loss—sunk or crippled—of five destroyers. None of Scheer's purposes had been accomplished. He had not rescued the *Wiesbaden*. He had sunk no enemy battleships. He had not surprised Jellicoe, nor affected the latter's plans for the night. He had not gained the easterly position, with its advantage of visibility and its open line of retreat.

He had merely succeeded in getting himself into a critical pocket, and then getting out again at heavy cost—and he had sacrificed precious time which might have been used to gain ground towards Wilhelmshaven.

Scheer no longer had the slightest doubt as to the numbers that lay before him, nor as to their position, course, and hitting power. He must include a sharply revised opinion of British gunnery in all future calculations. The destroyers which had returned from the torpedo attack reported that the enemy

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numbered more than twenty dreadnoughts and had been seen to the east, on a southerly course. At 7.32 he learned that the head of the British formation was closing in to the south-east.

Sundown and twilight lay only half an hour away. Darkness would be short. Dawn would come at two in the morning. At 3.0 it would be full light of another day.

Another battle?

Further battle, now or in the morning, could only be to Britain's advantage.

Scheer's one hope lay in reaching the German mine-fields before the enemy scattered and crushed him. In breaking through during the dark hours, resisting all attack—in utilizing the night as best he could to steam back towards Germany.

Feverish labour was going on in the damaged ships—burned and torn human bodies were being lifted on to stretchers and carried below to the over-taxed surgeons and their assistants in ill-ventilated battle dressing-stations. Among the wounded seamen the suffering from picric acid burns was heartrending; the blind, the scalded, the mangled lay in agony. Nauseating smells penetrated the close, stuffy decks—the sweetish reek of blood, the strangling stink of cordite gas, of burned paint and linoleum and electric insulation, the stifling hazy atmosphere of charred corpses. Mechanics and repair gangs attacked the wreckage, cutting away bent plates with acetylene torches, clearing jammed machinery, beating heavy baulks into place against threatened bulkheads. Gun-crews bolted down the battle-ration of bread and coffee that was passed out, finding themselves ravenously hungry. Men cursed and laughed . . . talked, and fell silent. Dirty stokers and engineers, eager for news of what had gone on on deck, climbed up from below for a hurried breath of fresh air and stood gaping at the destruction which had taken place, while in the command stations tired officers bent over charts discussing the course they would have to follow.

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In both fleets signs of strain were apparent—strain of the baptism to gun-fire. The experience of battle cut across the current of life, injecting fears and tensions too great to comprehend. Men strove to appear indifferent, to carry forward the existence that had been going on before, unaware that this unreal day would return into their dreams while they lived. It was growing raw and chill—in the exposed positions people realized that they were shivering with cold, and sent below for overcoats, only to receive the unexpected news that cabins and lockers were a mass of wreckage in which their possessions were a sodden pulp.

Laughter and curses.

The turn-away from the enemy had left the High Sea Fleet steaming in a scattered quarter-circle west and south. At 7.45, as the lull continued, Scheer decided to steer south-by-east for the Horns Reef channel through the German mine-fields.

His ships were in the reverse order and on the reverse course to that in which they had chased after Beatty three hours earlier. The old pre-dreadnoughts had become the van squadron; after them came Squadron I, with Squadron III bringing up the rear. The battle-cruisers were closing from the east.

The fleet had assumed the defensive.

The long column swung ponderously after its leaders to the new course, and the battle-cruisers turned on to a parallel course abreast the battleships. *Von der Tann* had finally managed to get her two waist turrets back into working order, though it was questionable how many salvos they could fire without running hot and failing once more. The after turret had also been got clear to the extent that it could be worked by hand.

At the head and rear of the fleet the light craft steamed towards their stations, forming up. *Lützow*, proceeding now with great difficulty under the escort of four destroyers, was following the retreat as best she could.

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By eight o'clock the leading German ships were not far from the spot where *Queen Mary* had gone down three hours before. Scheer was retracing the waters, on almost the identical course, followed by Beatty during the first part of the battle-cruiser action.

For thirty minutes gunfire had ceased on both sides. The German admiral was not certain what the enemy was doing, and as the lull persisted there were hopes that the torpedo attacks had been effective and done definite damage to the British line.

But at this moment the Grand Fleet was only ten miles away to the east, steering a rapidly converging course that made further contact inevitable.

Jellicoe had expected the enemy line to reappear as soon as the dense smoke-screens, laid by the retreating German destroyers, cleared away. Though he knew the High Sea Fleet's approximate location and correctly discerned Scheer's desire to return home, he believed to the end of the war that the enemy formation had followed a pathway approximately parallel to his own, steering, as he had steered, eastward and then south and then south-west.

After three or four minutes had passed, and the enemy failed to reappear, reports began to come in. From the rear, *Southampton* had made another of her indefatigable sorties and Commodore Goodenough had been the only British leader who had seen Scheer's ships turn west. He construed the manoeuvre, however, to mean that the Germans had detached a group of battleships and were scattering to avoid pursuit.

At the same time, from the head of the line, Beatty sent information that the enemy bore north-west of the *Lion*, distant ten or eleven miles, though this report was diminished in value by navigational errors in *Lion's* reported position, since the battle-cruiser Flagship was not visible from the *Iron Duke*.

But the scattered reports were enough. Jellicoe decided to move the entire fleet sharply west, to recover contact with his

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opponent before the latter gained too much sea-room. He ordered the dreadnoughts to form column, and from this column steer south-west by divisions, speed seventeen knots.

Out of sight ahead, Beatty had drawn five miles beyond the nearest ships of the main body, and was questing south-west at twenty knots. He had been in touch with the misty shapes of the German battle-cruisers until 7.45. Then he had lost them, and sent his light craft to try and regain contact.

The weather was thickening. Beatty believed the High Sea Fleet to be following the German battle-cruisers. He had seen nothing of the German torpedo attacks, knew nothing of the movements in the centre and at the rear of his own fleet. He had misread the tactics on both sides and the motives which inspired them.

Upon the spur of the moment, he sent to Jellicoe a signal which reflected his desire for combat, his desire to destroy the enemy—but it was transmitted at a time when he could see neither the Grand Fleet nor the High Sea Fleet, and knew nothing of the latter's exact position or course.

"Submit van of battleships follow battle-cruisers; we can then cut off whole of enemy's Battle Fleet."

This message, promptly sent and received, reached Admiral Jellicoe shortly after eight o'clock. Coming from his chief subordinate commander, it demanded consideration; but it was very puzzling.

Cut off the whole of the enemy Battle Fleet? Where was the *Lion*? The navigational position given in Beatty's signal was obviously many miles in error. Did Beatty have the enemy Battle Fleet in sight? What precisely did the message mean? The German Battle Fleet was already cut off from its bases—nothing could improve upon Jellicoe's position, course and speed for this purpose.

Yet, acting upon the assumption that some new development might have taken place in the van, of which he was unaware, the admiral ordered his vessels, which had just swung into their south-westerly echelon, to steer two points farther west in a

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movement which became direct pursuit of the foe. And, supposing his van battleship division must be within sight of the *Lion*, he immediately signalled these ships to follow the battle-cruisers.

Admiral Jerram, commanding the van squadron, received this signal at 8.7, but was placed in an equal quandary. He could see nothing of the battle-cruisers and nothing of the enemy.

Pending further information he decided to hold his present course.

Puzzling condition of affairs . . . messages, often contradictory and confusing, difficult to understand, pouring into the Fleet Flagship . . . visual signals passing through intermediate ships, greatly delayed in transmission. The fleets, only twelve miles apart, invisible to each other, converging rapidly, with *Friedrich der Grosse* and *Iron Duke* almost exactly abreast each other.

If a great wind had blown all the smoke and mist away, and granted the admirals just five minutes' vision of the true situation, they would have been struck by astonishment at the sight. But the air only grew thicker as the day drew to an end.

At this time the German Zeppelin *L-14* had reached a point eleven miles to the northward of the *Iron Duke* and was hovering above the rear of the British Grand Fleet. She had been informed by wireless that battle was going on in this area, but was unable to see any of the vessels on either side, had heard none of the sounds of gunfire, and remained unconscious that she was actually over the fleets of Jutland.

In the last minutes of half-light, men stared out. The units of their own fleets were merging into the gathering darkness which would hide them until morning.

Three groups of light craft had scouted out from the Grand Fleet towards the enemy—one at the head of the line, one in the centre and one at the rear—pushing west to regain touch.

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At a little after eight they made contact with the Germans at very short range, seeing the indistinct shapes of ships against the twilight sky.

There were three brief clashes, violent in their suddenness. From the centre of the High Sea Fleet, heavy German turrets spoke out in response, and the broadsides spat forth with a long ripple of vivid flame-spurts. The British scouts wheeled back towards their own fleet—the *Calliope* light cruiser had been struck five times, and had ten dead and twenty-three wounded.

At the van, Beatty's light cruisers met the German light cruiser vanguard. *München* received two hits, and the German unit turned and fled to the west.

At the rear, *Southampton*, leading the Second Light Cruiser Squadron, encountered enemy destroyers, and the German S-50 struggled after her retreating comrades with a damaged main steam-pipe.

The sound of the vanguard gun-fire led Beatty to close instantly. He had been waiting for this, and he led his battle-cruisers towards the gun-flashes. At 8.10 he distinguished, about six miles away, the German battle-cruisers, and a moment later saw the old battleships at the head of the German line.

In Beatty's ships, forty-two of the forty-eight heavy guns were clear and ready for action. Furious labour had made good many of the day's injuries. The British battle-cruisers had emerged from the fighting in far better shape than the battered German squadron. Beginning at 8.20, all six of Beatty's vessels opened a heavy fire.

The German battle-cruisers had not anticipated British ships in this quarter. For more than an hour Admiral Hipper had been following his vessels in the destroyer G-39, attempting to resume the command. At this moment he was just about to order the squadron to stop, so that he could board the *Moltke* as relief flagship. Suddenly the twilight was rent by the gun-flashes of the enemy, and the ships found themselves surrounded by roaring, merciless projectiles.

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All four of them replied with every gun they could bear, but their power was very weak and they could not see the enemy. In the unequal contest they scored only two hits—their gunnery officers shot more to encourage the crews, than in any real hope of striking the targets. But within four minutes *Seydlitz* had been hit amidships. *Derfflinger's* last remaining turret was put out of action, and another shell struck *Seydlitz*, crashing into the wreckage of the after turret . . . still another burst upon the navigating bridge, killing all the officers and men there, while its gas and concussion penetrated the conning-tower.

The German vessels veered off west towards the cover of the growing darkness. They "did not want to see any more" of the British. They drove so closely before their own dreadnought column that the tip of Scheer's heavy divisions was forced to swerve away to avoid collision, and then followed the movement west.

Up ahead, for a brief moment, the pre-dreadnoughts in the van attempted to stand up to Beatty's guns and fight. In the twilight three ships—*Schleswig-Holstein*, *Pommern* and *Schlesien*—were struck. Then, unable to see any targets, the old squadron turned away and the entire German fleet was being forced west.

At sight of the gun-flashes and the indistinct shapes of the German line, Jellicoe had at once ordered his deeply echeloned ships into a battle deployment on a southerly course.

Before he could fire a gun, the Germans had disappeared.

As they swerved away to the west they likewise disappeared to Beatty's sight, and the thundering gun-fire died to silence.

With every moment darkness was creeping down. It was no longer possible to distinguish friend from foe. Twilight was at an end.

Suddenly each of the British battle-cruisers in turn was shaken by a severe shock. For a moment it appeared that they had been torpedoed, but upon investigation the hulls were found tight,

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and it seemed, instead, that the concussion was caused by an under-water explosion in one of the ships sunk earlier in the day.

The gigantic circuit of the battlefield was complete. The ships had come to the very spot where they had fought four hours before, when the High Sea Fleet had first been sighted and no man had known what the clash would bring.

CHAPTER XXXII

NIGHT

JELlicoe had determined to avoid a general night mêlée of the fleets at all costs. The normal risks of battle became magnified beyond all bounds by the confusion sure to result from bringing major formations of dreadnoughts together in the dark—the collisions, the loss of order, the hopelessness of distinguishing friend from foe, the peril from torpedoes whose tracks could not be seen. As an added consideration, there was the efficiency of equipment and training which the enemy had shown in night fighting thus far during the war, which, together with his smaller, more easily manœuvred fleet, would be to his advantage in a gamble of this kind.

Jellicoe, with commanding advantage in numbers and position, had only to keep the Grand Fleet intact until morning to reap the triumph offered him by Germany's temerity in venturing so far to sea.

Two problems faced the British admiral. First, to stay across the enemy's line of retreat during the five and a half hours of darkness, so that Scheer would find it impossible to escape to his own harbours, and, second, to form the Grand Fleet for the night into a compact body that could withstand any night assaults from the German ships without sacrificing the tactical advantage, and "be in a position to resume the engagement at daylight."

Everything now rested upon the morrow, which would bring the interrupted battle to a finish.

Britain could face the outcome with perfect confidence. Of the nine British battle-cruisers which had come to sea, six were

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scarcely diminished in fighting power. Of twenty-eight battleships, only one had left the line. Jellicoe could bring thirty-three capital ships at virtually full strength—twenty-five of them untouched by enemy metal—to bear against the Germans.

Of eight armoured cruisers, one had been sunk and one was out of action; twenty-five of twenty-six light cruisers were without serious injury. Of seventy-eight torpedo-craft, three had been sunk, three were out of action, leaving seventy-two. One ship, the seaplane-carrier *Engadine*, had completed her duty and was going home.

The British admiral possessed 138 ships ready for battle of the 151 which had come to sea. This was the Grand Fleet, as strong as ever.

What line of retreat would Scheer choose?

There were three channels leading through the German mine-fields into Heligoland Bight. Jellicoe was aware of their location, and equally aware that they offered the only pathways by which the enemy might escape south into his own waters and reach home.

The nearest ran along the Danish-Schleswig-Holstein coasts, with its entrance near the Horns Reef. The farthest, the Ems channel, followed the West Friesian Islands. Midway between the two there was a channel via Heligoland.

Unless the British admiral received definite information as to which of these channels would be selected by Scheer for the High Sea Fleet's immediate line of retreat, he must prepare to block all three of them, covering the entire 120-mile line from the Horns Reef to the Ems.

At 9.17 he ordered the Grand Fleet to take up night-cruising formation and hold to the south at 17 knots. The battleships, answering the command, closed up into three columns abreast, distance between the columns one mile. The Sixth Division, held back by the torpedoed *Marlborough*, was unable to overtake the leaders, and remained three or four miles astern of the

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formation. The Fifth Battle Squadron, in its semi-independent status, likewise proceeded behind the fleet.

Directly ahead of the main body, the Fourth Light Cruiser Squadron took up scouting station five miles in the van, to guard against frontal attacks. Five miles in the rear, the flotillas of destroyers were distributed as a rear-guard—58 torpedo-craft to protect the hind-quarters of the fleet from attacks by enemy light craft, and keep watch lest the German battle fleet should strike down astern. The flanks were bare, so that no British forces could be mistaken for the enemy and fired on during the dark.

Beatty had last been heard from at the head of the German line. He had six battle-cruisers and three squadrons of light cruisers, and as he became aware, through intercepting the wireless message, that the fleet's course was south, he turned in the same direction for the night, and disposed his light cruisers as scouts. His Flagship was fifteen miles south-west of the *Iron Duke*, and he was directly ahead of the High Sea Fleet, in position to prevent Scheer from increasing speed and passing ahead of the British ships to safety.

One other unit had become separated from Jellicoe's main body. Commodore Goodenough's Second Light Cruiser Squadron, led by the *Southampton*, had gone west into the dark in pursuit of information, continuing the day's scouting activities, and was steaming midway between the British and German lines.

The night formation of the British fleet was like the mighty British lion—head, body and claws. The course was south, the speed was seventeen knots, the general arrangement was, roughly, a reversed L, with the Germans caught within the angle.

The ships guarded all the direct lines of German retreat. Only four courses, all equally unpromising, were left open to Scheer: either he must remain within the enveloping British formation and accept battle at daylight; or he must seek to break through the Grand Fleet in a night attack and thus escape

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home; or he might run west into the open North Sea, hoping that fog would hide him until the retreat was clear—or turn north in a dash towards the Skagerrak to try and out-distance his pursuers and find safety in the Baltic.

As a final precaution, Jellicoe sent the fast mine-layer *Abdiel* to advance full speed to the entrance of the Horns Reef channel and lay mines there during the dark. He knew further that the Admiralty had already sent three submarines to lie in ambush in that vicinity.

The problem was now a trial of naval skill—to keep fleet formation in the darkness, ship clinging to ship, the long columns following their leaders, all lights extinguished except for the tiny, single, screened lantern over each stern close to the water.

The crews were still at battle stations. Men who had passed through the afternoon's action waited in the turrets and casemates, their faces drawn into harsh lines of weariness. There would be no sleep to-night.

As the gun-fire ceased, Scheer had ordered the High Sea Fleet back to its southerly course, and, like Jellicoe, had set about forming for the night.

The one purpose of the German commander was to return to port with as few further losses as possible—to resist night attack, to avoid the morning's battle, or, if it must be fought, to begin it near the German mine-fields so that an hour's retreating action would see him in safety. His fighting strength had suffered so seriously that he could no longer face a general engagement with confidence.

He had lost one battle-cruiser, *Lützow*, one light cruiser, *Wiesbaden*, and four destroyers, from the line. Had this been the only damage, his situation would have been less serious; but of the four battle-cruisers still in company, only one was fit for action. Three of his dreadnoughts had sustained marked injuries, and the six pre-dreadnoughts were a liability rather than an asset. He had only 17 effective capital ships to meet the enemy's 33-38.

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The German admiral had come to sea with 101 vessels. He still had 95 in company, but the injuries to his most vital units were such that the High Sea Fleet had lost between a fifth and a quarter of its fighting value, while the torpedo craft had shot away a large percentage of their torpedoes.

He decided on the nearest of the three channels, via Horns Reef. The entrance lay 90 miles away, nearly six hours' steaming at 16 knots. Should the ships deviate, even for a few minutes, from this objective, everything was lost. If the enemy tried to bar the way, the High Sea Fleet must break through during the dark, while its chances were best.

The pre-dreadnought battleships, too weak for their van position, must come back to the rear, placing the *Westfalen* dreadnought in the lead, followed by Squadron I, Squadron III, and Squadron II.

At 9.10 he issued the peremptory command: "*Gros Kurs SSO½O durchhalten! Fahrt 16 Seemeilen. Grosse Kreuzer anhängen. II Geschwader an den Schluss.*" ("Fleet must maintain course SSE½E! Speed 16 knots. Battle-cruisers join astern. Squadron II to the rear.")

Simultaneously he sent an urgent message to the German Admiralty asking that Zeppelin reconnaissance should meet him off the entrance to the Horns Reef channel at daybreak.

The light cruisers were detailed to west flank and van for screening duty, while the destroyers were sent to night attacking sectors with orders to seek contact with the enveloping British during the dark—they were to rejoin the main body off Horns Reef at daybreak, or if cut off, to make for the Baltic by way of the Skagerrak.

Only one thing occurred to mar the carrying out of the night disposition. At 9.5 Admiral Hipper had finally managed to transfer from the destroyer G-39 to the *Moltke*, and resumed command of the battle-cruisers. He found the squadron abreast the fleet, two or three miles distant, invisible in the darkness, and he did not receive the signal ordering the battle-cruisers to follow astern of the dreadnoughts.

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Instead, Hipper commanded the four ships to steam ahead and take station as a vanguard. *Moltke* and *Seydlitz* drew forward into the night, but *Derfflinger* was unable to follow because of the injuries to her hull, while *Von der Tann's* fires were so dirty and choked with clinker that 20 knots was too much for her. The two stragglers faltered along until they were seen from the Fleet Flagship and ordered by flashing lamp to attach themselves to the rear. Meantime *Moltke* and *Seydlitz* had disappeared, and spent the night out of touch with the fleet, finally losing each other in the dark when *Seydlitz* could no longer follow her leader. Several times *Moltke* stumbled into the Grand Fleet's formation, but managed to escape recognition and resumed her blind progress.

With the exception of these two ships, and of Commodore von Reuter's squadron of light cruisers, likewise lost to sight, the High Sea Fleet's formation was completed by 10.0 o'clock. Twenty-four heavy vessels in one long column ploughed on into uncertainty, all their guns manned, their searchlights ready to flash on, each ship clinging to her leader.

Of all the nights the seas have known, that which followed was one of the strangest. The fates were busy, weaving the threads of destiny. The blind fleets, unconscious of the workings of circumstance, steamed almost side by side, so close to each other in the darkness that they were like members of one great common formation.

Their courses were slightly converging. They steamed down the sides of a very long, very slender V, and it was one of the most curious circumstances in history that they did not come together at the V's point. A matter of minutes—of a quarter of an hour—of the fact that Scheer had sent his leading ships back to the rear of his line, while Jellicoe had drawn the British rear up to form upon the Grand Fleet leaders; of the fact that Britain's speed was 17 knots, while the German speed was 16.

Tiny factors, and no human plan, caused Jellicoe to arrive at the bottom of the V and pass through the junction point

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short minutes before the German ships arrived. The V became an X—the courses of the fleets crossed, neither side was conscious of what was happening—and from then onward, from the hour of midnight onward, they began to draw apart.

This did not happen without incident. The British battle-ships had passed through the junction-point before the German vessels arrived, but the British rear-guard of destroyers, five miles behind the Grand Fleet, had not yet reached the critical spot. And the episodes of the night, which cost blood and ships on both sides, centred about the clashes which took place as the German van and the British flotillas stumbled into each other in the dark, holding to their courses, unaware that they were crossing pathways, each believing the other was attacking.

But even before that happened, the night's adventures began, while the fleets were still approaching each other in the V, blind ships feeling their way forward.

"Please give me signals for challenge and reply now in use, as they have been lost."

Lion blinked the inquiry by flashing lamp, to *Princess Royal*. The reply was seen by an enemy ship—the Germans had obtained a precious secret, which was communicated throughout the German fleet. "First sign of the enemy challenge is 'U.A.'"

Half an hour later, *Castor*, leading a British flotilla rearward between the fleets, sighted several light cruisers, actually Commodore von Reuter's lost squadron, which belonged several miles away on the other flank of the German formation. They made the first letters of the British "challenge"—then immediately opened fire in a sudden, dazzling glare of searchlights. *Castor* replied, but her destroyers, in doubt whether they faced friend or foe, and to avoid the tragedy of sinking a consort, withheld their fire.

Commodore Goodenough's *Southampton*, stealing along, followed by three sister light cruisers, saw the brief action and

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steamed to investigate. At 10.20 the four British ships became aware of the Germans only half a mile away—an indistinct column of light cruisers in the night. For a few moments nothing happened; the men on the opposing bridges stared across, talking in whispers, trying to make sure whether it was actually the enemy, seeing only the indistinct shapes of masts and funnels against the deep night sky.

Suddenly the coloured lights of the German challenge flashed out, and instantly furious gun-fire opened from some sixty guns. Blinding searchlights levelled themselves in the faces of those on *Southampton's* bridge. The distance was so short that it was almost impossible for the gunners to miss. *Southampton* and *Dublin* were raked by salvo after salvo.

"Starboard torpedo tube, fire!"

The deadly British missile ran true. . . . Before the deafening detonation died away, the German light cruiser *Frauenlob*, veteran of Heligoland Bight, had disappeared beneath the sea, taking 12 officers and 308 men to their deaths.

Battered *Southampton*, afire from eighteen hits, made off from the scene of her "kill," trying to report her engagement and the enemy's position to Jellicoe—but her wireless had been shot away, and the message did not reach the Fleet Flagship until one hour later.

The flicker of gun-fire, the glare of distant searchlights, were seen from the dreadnoughts at the rear of the British main body where the Fifth Battle Squadron was following along after Jellicoe's night formation. Their significance was misunderstood—in the absence of information to the contrary, they were interpreted to mean that enemy torpedo craft were endeavouring to attack from astern and were being beaten off by the destroyers stationed there for that purpose. The episode was not considered important enough to report to the Fleet Flagship.

Ten . . . twenty . . . thirty . . . thirty-five miles—Jellicoe steamed southward, unaware of Scheer's movements, confident, since he received no reports, that the enemy was still

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enveloped by the Grand Fleet's formation. Yet it was not long before the two rear ships of the Fifth Battle Squadron received fresh and clear evidence of the enemy's position—*Malaya* actually identified a German battleship when the van of the High Sea Fleet became illuminated by gun-fire and explosion.

"For some reason, this important piece of information was not passed to the Commander-in-Chief to warn him that he was drawing ahead of the enemy."

Had the information been sent, there is no question that the engagement would have been resumed at daylight. But Jellicoe's plans depended upon the proper functioning of every cog in his mammoth machine. This night the fortunes of war favoured his opponent.

Was there any other information upon which Jellicoe might have acted?

The British Admiralty had intercepted and decoded Scheer's wireless message asking for an airship reconnaissance off the Horns Reef, but apparently had quite failed to grasp the enormous importance of transmitting it without delay to Jellicoe. It was not until a considerable time had elapsed, and two further messages from Scheer had been intercepted that, at 10.41, London decided to forward a summary of the intelligence. This summary gave the position, course and speed of the German fleet shortly after nine o'clock, as well as the information that it had been ordered home, but it was not in Jellicoe's hands until half-past eleven, and it failed to contain the most significant fact of all, which was, that the Horns Reef channel had been definitely indicated as the German objective. Here was the pivotal point about which the entire situation revolved.

True, the enemy course and speed, as established by the Admiralty, pointed to Horns Reef as the German goal, but Jellicoe's confidence in the infallibility of Admiralty intelligence had been shaken earlier in the day, and he felt it inadvisable to stake everything upon this one message. Here at sea there was

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an entire lack of evidence to confirm the Admiralty's information. It seemed impossible that the enemy fleet, on this course, could come barging into some part of the Grand Fleet's huge formation—as it must—without messages pouring into the Fleet Flagship to tell of the contact.

Throughout the night no messages came.

The destroyers at the rear, face to face with the enemy Battle Fleet, were scurrying through chaotic confusion to re-organize their broken formations before the phantom wave swept them before it. In many of them all wireless mechanism was shot away; many of them were seriously damaged, struggling for their lives, and at the first sound of British messages the German wireless operators were sending roars of interference into the ether. Much can be said to justify and explain the failure of the British flotillas to send in reports during the night, but the fact remains, no single report reached the Flagship from the dozens of ships that were in action.

At 11.30 Jellicoe's main body had passed through the bottom of the V, and Scheer's leading ships were just arriving. Fifteen minutes earlier British dreadnoughts had been churning through the same water. The fleets were so close to each other that had they turned on their steaming-lights they would have formed an unbroken pattern twenty miles long—yet they had no idea of each other's position.

Four looming shadows, thought to be German light cruisers, grew out of the darkness, their course converging upon that of the Fourth Flotilla led by *Tipperary*, with *Broke*, *Ardent*, *Fortune*, *Sparrowhawk*, *Spitfire*, *Garland*, *Contest*, *Achates*, *Ambuscade*, *Porpoise*, and *Unity* following after her.

The vanguard of the High Sea Fleet was breaking through the British rear.

Eyes strained through the night . . . half a mile away . . . Friend or foe?

Tipperary made the "challenge"—its last faint flashes were swallowed up in the glare of *Elbing's* searchlights—then the

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first German salvo struck full into *Tipperary*, sweeping away her bridge and killing every soul in the fore-part of the ship.

Elbing, leading the four enemy light cruisers, had swerved to avoid the flight of torpedoes let loose by the British destroyers, and found herself steering straight in among the dreadnoughts of her own fleet. Before she could help herself, she was rammed and left in a sinking condition by *Posen*, fourth of the long line of battleships . . . *Elbing*—which, long hours before, had been the first to report the sighting of the British—thereby sounding her own death-knell.

Spitfire steamed to the crippled *Tipperary's* support, firing wildly at the glaring German searchlights as she came in. Monstrous apparitions loomed down upon her.

A collision was inevitable. Captain Trelawney called for full speed and ordered the helm to be put hard over—better to ram one of the German ships than to be cut in two. . . .

“Clear the forecastle!”

The order was given none too soon. With a reverberant crash of tearing metal, the two ships met. *Spitfire* reeled under the staggering impact, shaken to her last rivet. German guns belched white-hot flame and steel overhead, the blast “literally clearing everything before it,” wrecking the destroyer’s bridge, blowing away the foremast, knocking over the forward funnel, killing thirty-two men and tossing the captain down among the wreckage on the main deck, where he got to his feet to discover that, miraculously, his only injury was a scratched scalp.

Crashing . . . scraping . . . bumping against each other, the two ships drew apart and lost each other in the darkness—*Spitfire* little more than a wreck, telescoped for a third of her length, with a twenty-foot strip of German plating resting on her shattered forecastle as proof of her reckless daring courage—she had rammed the 20,000-ton *Nassau* and left an enormous hole gaping just above the German vessel’s waterline.

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Not until three years later did Trelawney learn the identity of his antagonist. He had circled the head of the German column and tackled, not a light cruiser, but a German dreadnought.

Meantime the Fourth Flotilla had re-formed under the flotilla-leader *Broke*, which led *Sparrowhawk*, *Contest*, *Achates*, *Ambuscade*, *Ardent*, *Fortune* and *Porpoise* back to the attack, still unaware that it was the High Sea Fleet battle-line that she faced.

The glare of searchlights and a torrent of gun-fire concentrated on the leading British ship. High above, star-shells were bursting, throwing lurid light upon the scene. The gallant British Fourth Flotilla was further dismembered. *Broke*, with rudder jammed, turned in a helpless circle, crashing into *Sparrowhawk*, her sharp bow cleaving deep into the latter's hull. *Garland* missed ramming her interlocked friends by inches. Then *Contest*, at high speed, pitched out of the darkness to cut six feet off *Sparrowhawk's* stern.

British torpedoes streaked through the water. The concussion of a heavy explosion was felt by every ship for miles . . . it was the German light cruiser *Rostock*, which had met a torpedo full amidships and limped out of the turmoil and confusion to struggle through the night, vainly, until she sank.

A solitary British ship was coming south through the darkness, making all speed—the old armoured-cruiser *Black Prince*, which had become separated from her consorts at "Windy Corner" and had steamed after the Grand Fleet for hours, hoping to rejoin.

Dreadnoughts in the west . . . surely these were her friends—

She drew closer . . . confidently flashed the recognition signal.

Her answer came from the guns of *Thuringen*, *Ostfriesland* and *Friedrich der Grosse*—a tornado of turret-shell at point-blank range.

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The unfortunate armoured cruiser was never able to open fire in reply. Roaring like an incandescent furnace, she drove past the full length of the German line, two of her four funnels blown overboard, lurid yellow-red flames shooting a hundred feet high out of her, a few men running on her deck, her metal glowing red with the heat. Out of control she passed within yards of the drifting *Spitfire*, lighting the Stygian darkness until, with an explosion like a thunder-clap, she and every man of her crew disappeared beneath the sea.

Defence . . . Warrior . . . and now Black Prince! Of the four ships in Sir Robert Arbuthnot's ill-fated squadron, only one, *Duke of Edinburgh*, remained.

In these few minutes of chaos the Fourth Flotilla had reformed for a third time. Still abreast the head of the German line, it attacked again, and once more the German ships swerved out to avoid torpedoes, their guns and searchlights blazing.

Another British destroyer, *Fortune*, fell victim to the vicious steel. Destroyer shells were beating against the dreadnought armour, bursting about the blinding searchlights. In the battleship *Oldenburg* every man on the bridge was struck down . . . the captain, badly wounded, struggled to his feet to find the helmsman dead, the ship steaming wild—he struggled to the wheel and stood there swaying, steering the dreadnought until help came.

Meanwhile *Ardent*, damaged and lost from the rest of the flotilla, had gone off into the dark in search of them. Sighting enemy silhouettes in the west on a course parallel to her own, she steered in to launch her last torpedo . . . and was met by a burst of gun-fire that finished her. Before the end came, the leading signalman turned to the captain to say: "Well, the old *Ardent* at least has done her bit, sir." Then she sank—and only two of her company of seventy lived to be rescued.

The Fourth Flotilla was scattered. Yet it had achieved extraordinary results. At a cost of four destroyers it had sunk two enemy light cruisers, seriously damaged a dreadnought,

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inflicted heavy casualties to bridge and searchlight personnel in all the leading German battleships. Three of its surviving boats were badly hurt, but its encounters with ships many times its strength had displayed a gallantry which was another shining page in the long British naval epic. Its one failure had been the neglect to communicate intelligence of its adventures to Admiral Jellicoe.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE MIDDLE WATCH

THE Grand Fleet maintained its course southward. Forty . . . forty-five . . . fifty miles. . . . Every three minutes and a half another mile to the south.

Scheer, believing he was being attacked by British destroyers sent out to drive him west, could not guess that he was actually crossing astern of the enemy.

Again he issued the order "*Durchhalten!*" Three times the tip of the line had swerved to avoid torpedo attack. Every deviation, every moment lost in gaining the shelter of the mine-fields, was a gamble with destiny. Every ticking second, every stroke of the ship's bell sounding away the half-hours of the middle watch, heralded the approach of dawn.

"*Durchhalten!*" (Hold the course!)

Westfalen, at the tip, had been distinguished by the accuracy of her shooting in her contests with the British destroyers.

Shortly before one o'clock, when her guns had been silent for more than half an hour, she became aware of ships just ahead of her. A long column of British torpedo-craft stretched away into the darkness ahead of the High Sea Fleet, crossing over from port to starboard on a slightly intercepting course.

Westfalen challenged. Eleven of the destroyers had already gone ahead into the night. Only the last two had suddenly realized that the dreadnoughts were not the British Sixth Division, as they had supposed, but the High Sea Fleet.

One, two . . . three salvos from the *Westfalen* concentrated upon *Petard*, striking her at once. Then the searchlights

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trained swiftly around, found the slender grey shape of *Turbulent*, almost in front of the battleship's bow, and a blast from the guns blew the destroyer out of the water—she went down as though she had been rammed and sunk. As quickly the search-lights switched off again.

This was the most successful of all the night's episodes for the Germans. The column of eleven undamaged British destroyers went ahead into the darkness, unaware of the High Sea Fleet's presence.

Now the obstacles between Scheer and his objective had been reduced to a single distant British flotilla which—apart from a few scattered cripples—was the only British formation left across the German pathway.

For a long time, more than an hour, there was silence—the silence of deep night—so that the watching, waiting men found themselves struggling with the almost overpowering desire to sleep. The fleets were drawing apart, yard by yard, mile by mile, separating from the fateful circumstances which had brought them together. Even as they had met, they were separating in ignorance.

During the middle watch the sea started to rise—a fitful swell, stirring the ships into roll and heave . . . a thicker mist came down, changing at times into drizzling rain, until the visibility was less than two miles. This was the weather of the "Wet Triangle," of German waters and the flat lands. Concealed in it, the mine-layer *Abdiel* was heaving overboard her cargo of explosive in the Horns Reef channel.

Far to the north, *Wiesbaden* lay drifting close by "Windy Corner," in the spot which had seen the battle rise to its crescendo and as suddenly sweep on. She was full of corpses, a ship battered out of all semblance to her original appearance. Twenty or twenty-five numbed survivors huddled on her deck beside a little group of wounded, whom they had tended and bandaged and covered with blankets. The first officer had appeared, wounded and walking in a coma; they had brought a chair for

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him to sit in. During the middle watch, as the sea rose, *Wiesbaden* acquired the peculiar, sluggish feeling of a sinking ship. Suddenly she started to turn over, and her people found themselves cast into the icy darkness—water full of floating bodies and bits of wreckage. The ship was gone. . . .

Forty hours later a delirious stoker petty officer was picked up from a raft off the Danish coast, and saved. . . . He was *Wiesbaden's* one survivor.

Many miles away *Elbing*, rammed in the night confusion, had been abandoned by all but a small salvage party. Towards dawn her look-out sighted British destroyers, and to keep her out of enemy hands she was blown up; her remaining people took to a boat.

Sparrowhawk, bow and stern cut away, was a wreck. *Tipperary* had sunk into the dark, and one raft-load of her men, bellowing the song "Tipperary," managed to reach *Sparrowhawk's* doubtful security, while one officer, the surgeon, was picked up by *Elbing's* boat and finally transferred to a Dutch steamer. The rest were gone.

The men aboard *Sparrowhawk* were finally taken off by British destroyers searching the area after daybreak, and the sinking ship was abandoned.

Lützow, mightiest of German battle-cruisers, was nearing the end of her career, settling further and further as water continued to enter her hull. In the small hours the destroyers of her escort were called alongside, and 1,041 officers and men abandoned her. Two German torpedoes were fired into the hulk to hasten her doom, and she vanished, taking her dead with her.

The crippled *Onslow* was being towed towards the British coast at 6 knots by the all but equally crippled *Defender*—both lived to return to the wars. But *Warrior*, in tow of *Engadine*, was beyond saving and was abandoned; and in the area of the night fighting *Fortune* and *Ardent* had gone down not far from one another, leaving groups of swimming men.

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Several hundred British and German seafarers were drowned in the rising sea during the dark hours. The water was so cold that it numbed the senses; for the most part the men knew little pain, but drifted into unconsciousness.

"They simply lay back and went to sleep."

During the last hours, as they clung to wreckage in the hope of rescue, most of them expressed satisfaction that they and their ships had done their duty. The little companies of shipmates grew smaller and smaller . . . men encouraged each other to hold on, stoutly maintaining that help would come. But when the moment arrived, and death was there, it was met with stoic calm—the year 1916 was a year in which death, and not life, was the portion of man.

At a quarter to two in the morning the first faint trace of dawn came into the eastern sky. The fog over the uneasy sea was thickening—it would be a morning shrouded in grey.

The German line was still steaming toward Horns Reef channel. The destroyers sent off hours before to try to find the British were returning unsuccessful—none of them had located the enemy. *Moltke*, lost for hours, had finally got herself loose from the enemy fleet and was feeling her way towards the formation.

Horns Reef lightship was only twenty miles away—another two hours' steaming would find the ships within reach of the channel which had been their objective throughout the night.

But one group of British destroyers still remained to the east. The Twelfth Flotilla had been turned and held back by isolated incidents, and was now twenty-five miles behind Jellicoe—and this flotilla encountered the German ships at dawn.

The whole of Scheer's line could be seen . . . four or five indistinct dreadnoughts. The flotilla commander, calling for 25 knots' speed, grasped the importance of the contact, the fact that news must be got to Jellicoe.

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"*Urgent! Priority! Have sighted enemy battleships! My position ten miles behind First Battle Squadron!*"

"*Urgent! I am attacking!*"

But like so many other reports that night, the messages failed to break through the roar of German interference, and never reached the Fleet Flagship.

The attack was brilliantly carried out. The flotilla went forward unseen, and then turned to sweep down upon the Germans. In the half-light the searchlights had lost their effectiveness, and the High Sea Fleet, expecting the return of its own destroyers, was caught off guard. Full abreast the enemy the torpedoes were launched. Scheer's line swerved into belated defence manoeuvres, but the torpedoes ran straight and hard. There was a sudden explosion . . . a ruddy glow appeared in the old battleship *Pommern* . . . it grew and spread into a tremendous roar of flame and sound. The destroyers watched her blow up, lighting the dawn, to break in two and vanish with all hands, 844 officers and men.

A second wave of the attack swept in and then went off to the northward. Only one British ship had been struck—*Onslaught*—last British vessel to feel enemy fire that day.

A moment later the battle's episodes ended with an inexplicable event, when the German destroyer *V-4*, steaming at the head of the column, suddenly blew up. Either she had run upon a drifting mine, or a drifting torpedo, or one of her own torpedo war-heads had detonated. Like a warning that the High Sea Fleet, having escaped Jellicoe, would destroy itself, this ship began to sink, and her survivors barely managed to scramble to one of her sister-ships which came alongside.

With every minute dawn grew brighter. There was a thick haze, a sullen greenish sea. Ships came out of the darkness . . . the weather was so thick that the full length of a squadron could not be seen. Within the turrets men stood to the guns, expecting the resumption of battle at any moment. . . . It would be a

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battle of mist; but both fleets had made ready to take it up, gun to gun. . . .

Full dawn grew and there was no enemy in sight. The fleets steamed on, each alone, each in utter ignorance as to the whereabouts of the other.

Among the German ships the conviction grew that the British would not appear. A feeling of elation and triumph swept from man to man—the strain of the night became half-hysterical exultation. . . . They believed that the impossible had happened—that the mighty enemy had withdrawn from the field, leaving them in undisputed possession. . . .

Thirty miles away, in the Grand Fleet, a feeling of bitter disappointment and numbed resentment grew with the realization that the enemy had vanished, departed from the lists, and was not present to do battle.

In the fleet commands, British and German alike, the greatest uncertainty reigned as to where the enemy could actually be. Scheer and Jellicoe were equally at a loss to explain the situation . . . each tried to find the solution to the mystery. Scheer persisted for years that Jellicoe had never come south, but had turned north the evening before with the Grand Fleet's main body, leaving only the destroyers to challenge the German retreat. Jellicoe felt that Scheer must still be in the area to the north or north-east, working over towards the Danish coast, while Beatty believed the enemy must have struck to the westward.

The British Commander-in-Chief had planned to close Horns Reef at daylight, provided nothing definite had been learned of the German position by that time. But in the low visibility the position of many of his own units had become uncertain, while the destroyer rear-guard had been scattered by the encounters of the night, and Jellicoe decided to re-form and reassemble before beginning any active search. At 2.30 in the morning the Grand Fleet turned to the north to assume formation for the day's work.

Then, in the dawn, the sound of heavy firing was heard in the west. Hundreds of men stood to the guns. . . .

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The German Zeppelin *L-11*, huge and strange in her smooth movement, was sailing above Beatty's battle-cruisers. Dozens of guns fired up at her vainly.

Shortly afterwards she appeared over the British main body. Again the guns thundered. It seemed certain she was making a detailed count of the ships and would report their precise location to the German commander—actually, her count was very inexact, and Scheer decided the ships she had sighted were fresh British forces arriving from Harwich and the Channel.

At 4.15 an Admiralty message, sent an hour earlier, was handed to Admiral Jellicoe. It stated that at 3 o'clock the High Sea Fleet had been only sixteen miles from the Horns Reef, and the British admiral learned at last that his enemy had broken through and made good his escape.

The Germans had left behind in the North Sea the battle-cruiser *Lützow*, the battleship *Pommern*, the light cruisers *Wiesbaden*, *Elbing*, *Rostock* and *Frauenlob*, and the destroyers *V-4*, *V-48*, *V-27*, *V-29* and *S-35*. Of the fleet which returned, twelve battleships, four battle-cruisers, five light cruisers and nine destroyers bore the scars of British metal and had dead and injured among their crews. The fleet's injuries were such that further fighting would have found it decisively handicapped. The ships steered into the Horns Reef channel to return to harbour, and there the battleship *Ostfriesland* ran upon one of the British mines which Jellicoe had had placed to damage the enemy. With this final injury Admiral Scheer went homeward.

The Battle of Jutland was over—but Scheer, aided by fate, had saved the High Sea Fleet.

CHAPTER XXXIV

HARBOUR

THE Grand Fleet steamed north through a huge, melancholy waste of water, sweeping back through the scene of the night fighting and of yesterday's action—waters littered with the flotsam of naval battle—vast patches of oil, hundreds of seamen's hammocks, stiff corpses floating in the uniforms of both navies, drifting life-buoys, pieces of wood, desolate memories of the destruction which had been the price of this naval adventure.

Eight thousand, six hundred mariners had gone to their deaths—a host of good seamen and brave souls; 6,094 Britons—2,551 Germans. Most of them had gone down with their sunken ships—two admirals, many officers, a multitude of men, all levelled in the great equality of eternity. Many were cast up upon the Jutland coast by the tides, and found their last resting-places in the graveyards of Danish fishing villages. The returning fleets carried others—the German bodies were being taken to Wilhelmshaven, to be buried with military honours in the Naval Cemetery there. The British, believing the sea to be the seaman's proper tomb, were piping all hands to bury the dead, and consigning the fallen to the deep—lashed in their hammocks, with a projectile at head and feet, in the quaint formality of salt water, even as Sir Francis Drake had gone to his rest three hundred years before.

The Grand Fleet had formed, ship after ship rejoining and taking her place. As the crews were relieved from battle stations and told off to cruising stations, men lay down and sank into the exhausted sleep that follows overwork and strain. Others

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laboured on, clearing away wreckage, standing by their guns, keeping watch on bridge and at engines.

Towards noon, having completed the search of the battle area, the fleet began the long journey to Scapa Flow. Jutland belonged to the past, and until peace came, battles were episodes and duty was life. Absent for ever from their places were the battle-cruisers *Indefatigable*, *Queen Mary* and *Invincible*, the armoured cruisers *Defence*, *Warrior*, and *Black Prince*, the destroyers *Nestor*, *Nomad*, *Tipperary*, *Ardent*, *Fortune*, *Sparrowhawk*, *Shark* and *Turbulent*. Yet, to-day as yesterday, the Grand Fleet was incomparably the greatest armada ever forged by human hands. Squadron by squadron, flotilla by flotilla, it went past in formation, Beatty steering for Rosyth, Jellicoe for Scapa Flow.

At the same hour, mid-afternoon of June the first, German vessels were arriving in their harbours. At Wilhelmshaven the great locks opened to receive the first of the wounded dreadnoughts. Five battleships had remained on outpost duty at Schillig Road, ready for action, while the rest of the High Sea Fleet proceeded to its bases to take in fuel and ammunition, to fill up crews, to go into dock for the repair of injuries.

Willing hands made the ships fast, taking the heaving lines and hawsers sent across by the sailors; hundreds of eyes gazed at the battered sides, the jagged metal and gaping shell-holes; greetings were called across. Ambulances were waiting for the wounded—and coal and ammunition barges for the dreadnoughts. The battle-cruisers, coming in, were the objects of fascinated curiosity—it would be weeks and months before they took the sea again.

Throughout the night and the next morning the locks opened and closed . . . opened and closed. Ship after ship warped to the inner quays and began the dirty, wearying labour of repair and replenishment.

Everywhere along the German coast, harbours and dock-yards were busy receiving ships, great and small. Inspectors

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climbed aboard to learn the extent of the damages so that they might inform the Fleet Command how soon the fleet would be ready again for action. Gangs of workers came into the ships; giant cranes began to lift away battered deck and side plating, cracked armour plate and massive sections of turrets.

The battleship *Ostfriesland* came in last, struggling with her mine injuries, while *Seydlitz*, so badly damaged during the action, lay grounded on a sand-bank in Heligoland Bight, with pumping-vessels and repair ships labouring to refloat her.

In the flag cabin in *Friedrich der Grosse* a tired admiral, worried over the losses, whose details were not yet fully established, was conscious that he had done his utmost and lived up to the trust placed in him by Emperor and Fatherland. He had already sent a message of appreciation to the fleet, closing with the words: "*Deutschland und unser Kaiser über alles!*" To the Kaiser he had sent a brief, preliminary report. To-morrow, June 2, he would set about preparing his complete report—a tremendous task, which would occupy at least a month.

There was a rap at the door.

"A message for you, *Exzellenz*." His servant handed him an envelope bearing an official seal. . . . It was from the Emperor.

"I am proud of our mighty fleet, which has proved by this feat of arms that it is a match for a superior enemy."

. . . Then he lay down to snatch a few minutes' rest—the sleep of exhaustion overcame Vice-Admiral Scheer, who had attained glory sufficient to rank him among the fleet commanders worthy of the name "Great."

Not until June the 2nd did the Grand Fleet complete the long journey back to British harbours. The sea was rough, the weather raw and stormy.

On the morning of the 2nd, *Lion* led the battle-cruisers into the Firth of Forth, past the great citadel of Edinburgh, on under the colossal railway bridge to the anchorage off Rosyth.

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At noon of the same day, the Battle Fleet was in the Pentland Firth, with the Orkney Islands rising low and familiar to the northward, the bleak coast of Scotland to the south.

The picket boats on guard at the entrance watched the silent majestic procession enter slowly through the gates in the anti-submarine booms at Hoxa Sound—tall ships which made these waters an indelible part of the Royal Navy's history . . . squadron by squadron coming in weary from sea. The flocks of Orkney sheep looked across from the islands, and there was the distant sound of rams bleating the welcome to Great Britain's Silent Service.

From the bridge of *Iron Duke* the small, dark admiral, hollow-eyed and showing the effects of seventy hours of uninterrupted tension, watched the ships as they dropped their anchors, heard the rattle of chain-cable across the Flow. The ships formed the major part of the Grand Fleet for which he was directly responsible—they had performed as he knew they should have performed. He was conscious of a great occasion properly met—a great trust justified in action.

Ten hours later he informed the Admiralty that the fleet was ready for sea and battle at four hours' notice.

The following day was the King's birthday—he sent his Sovereign a message of respectful and heartfelt wishes in the name of the fleet and received from George V the following response:

"I am deeply touched by the message which you have sent me. . . . It reaches me on the morrow of a battle which has once more displayed the splendid gallantry of the officers and men under your command.

"I mourn the loss of brave men, many of them personal friends of my own, who have fallen in their country's cause. Yet even more do I regret that the German High Sea Fleet, in spite of its heavy losses, was enabled by the misty weather to evade the full consequences of an encounter which they have always professed to desire, but for which, when the opportunity arrived, they showed no inclination. . . ."

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On June 4, Jellicoe announced to his fleet that “. . . quite sufficient is already known to enable me to state definitely that the glorious traditions handed down to us by generations of gallant seamen were most worthily upheld. . . .”

Here, too, spoke a commander whose place among the “great” was unassailable.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE VERDICT

TO reach a verdict as to who won the Battle of Jutland it is necessary to consider the pros and cons of a subject intensely debated for years—to view it without passion in the long perspective of history, realizing that both navies had fought with all valour and skill, and that success had been measured by the coldest of facts.

In its essential the battle was a conflict between Jellicoe and Scheer, each man using the weapons at his command to further the winning of a titanic war. Each had had ultimate victory as his goal; each had hewn to this vision. To each the question of actual combat was important only as it bore upon the major issue—each man's tactics, his sense of employing his ships, had been based upon the realization that this battle was only an incident in a much greater struggle.

Scheer, the attacker—the man who *must* attack—had been repulsed. This fact, in the ultimate, decided the Battle of Jutland and the war upon the seas.

As minor incidents, there had been a number of individual actions between opposing vessels or opposing squadrons—actions measured not in terms of naval strategy, but of the individual fighting power and construction of ships.

This secondary duelling had given victories to both sides. The initial meeting between Hipper and Beatty had been a decided German victory—so had the brief engagement between *Lützow*, *Derfflinger* and *Invincible*, and the night contact between the High Sea Fleet and the destroyer formation led by *Lydiard*.

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Germany's successes had not, however, had the slightest effect upon the fortunes, the strategy, or even the tactics of the battle. The British fleet had not felt its losses, and had proceeded in exactly the same manner as though the losses had not taken place. Germany had been cursed by winning where it was unimportant to win.

There had been a number of equally decisive British victories—in particular the second, third and fourth meetings between Beatty and the German battle-cruisers; the Fifth Battle Squadron's run to the north in the face of a much superior enemy concentration; the actual contacts between the main fleets; and the day and night torpedo attacks which had sunk *Pommern*, and *Frauenlob*, torpedoed *Seydlitz* and *Rostock*, and caused the ramming of *Elbing*.

All of Britain's triumphs had come at highly significant moments, and had affected, vitally, the tactics and strategy of both sides. The fortunes of the navies and the destinies of both nations had been decided by them. Britain had won where the outcome of the war depended upon winning.

The crux of the battle had been the actual meetings between the fleets—very brief, but both finding Jellicoe ready with every bit of his power concentrated and brought to bear; while Scheer, numerically inferior to begin with, was employing his ships in such a manner that only a fraction of his gun-power could be directed at the enemy. This had been the acid proof of the commanders. At both moments the Grand Fleet had risen to the occasion perfectly. The British dreadnoughts' gunnery had been the factor which actually stopped the German advance—the power to find the target and hit. Had they failed—had they not been able to strike the German ships the instant the shadowy shapes became visible through gaps in the mist—then Scheer would have come on, and with every minute the problem of stopping him would have been more difficult. At the most crucial moment of the naval war the Grand Fleet was most effectively led and proved itself most effective. Here Britain was most decisively superior at sea.

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In tonnage and number of ships lost, Britain had sustained the greater damage—14 ships, 112,000 tons, as compared with 11 ships of 60,000 tons. In this the German fleet had been aided by the fact that the battle took place so close to German waters, as *Seydlitz*, and possibly *Derfflinger* also, would have found it impossible to make a return journey as long as that required of the Grand Fleet.

Three-quarters of the British loss of life and tonnage had been caused by the blowing up of five large ships, which went down with violent suddenness because their magazines were vulnerable. Barring this tragic weakness, three of the five—the three battle-cruisers—would normally have survived the action, as their gun injuries were relatively trivial.

Similarly, half the German loss of life had been caused by the blowing-up of *Pommern* and *Frauenlob*, ships of equally fatal construction. On both sides gun-fire had been less of a threat to life than the menace of weak hulls and exposed magazines.

In killed and wounded, Britain had lost, mainly due to the five violent episodes, 6,094 officers and men, had 674 injured, and 177 picked up from the water by the Germans and taken prisoner; Germany had 2,551 dead and 507 injured.

The gunnery of the fleets had been equally accurate. The determining factor had been, not the ability to score hits, but to score them at decisive moments.

The figures published after the war by the German Admiralty—frequently quoted in both countries with the object of proving that Germany's gun-fire had been markedly more accurate than that of the British—unfortunately contained misleading inaccuracies unworthy of such a source. They contended that Germany had fired 3,597 heavy shells, made 120 hits, and achieved 3·33 per cent. of hits, while Britain had fired 4,598 heavy shells, made 100 hits, and scored 2·17 per cent. of hits.

These statistics reckoned 37 hits, over one-quarter of the German total, upon the three British armoured cruisers—*Warrior* (15), *Defence* (7), and *Black Prince* (15)—ships fired upon at very short range, without effective reply, under conditions

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distinct from any other turret shooting during the battle. Hits made upon these ships were not a criterion an impartial naval source could consider indicative of the relative battle-shooting of the fleets.

The German statisticians allowed Britain no hits at all upon the sunken *Wiesbaden*, a ship literally battered to pieces by gun-fire of all calibres, and ascribed nine of the 26 hits suffered by *Derfflinger* to "middle or light artillery," although that ship was not fired on by any but heavy turret guns during the battle. Such figures had the effect of considerably lowering the British "score," while at the same time lending a plausible magnitude to that of the Germans.

Eighty-three battle hits form a fair measure of the High Sea Fleet's actual shooting and give a hit percentage—with due allowance for rounds fired—of 2.44, a reasonable comparison with the minimum British percentage of 2.17. Both sides could be proud of their gunnery—Germany in particular for the artillery superiority she secured during the first half-hour of the battle-cruiser action, for she was opposed to a fleet whose shooting was splendid, and whose equipment—notably the "director" for controlling a ship's main battery as one unit—was excellent.

Germany proved unexpectedly weak with the torpedo, chiefly owing to the effectiveness of Jellicoe's defensive tactics and the failure of the German destroyers to find the Grand Fleet after they had been ordered to make night attacks.

It was not in shooting, but in the ability of certain classes of vessels to stay afloat after serious damage that Germany displayed marked excellence. *Wiesbaden*, a light cruiser, manifested a toughness and buoyancy that were extraordinary. *Lützow*, *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* made way under their own steam after casualties that might well have sent them to the bottom—Germany's designers and ship-builders had approached the ideal of the contemporary battle-cruiser type, while the German crews had been superbly trained in leak-stopping and damage control. But the weak spots in Britain's battle-cruisers were specific—

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magazines vulnerable to flash, turrets and vitals too lightly armoured—and these defects were readily and effectively corrected immediately after the lessons of Jutland.

Britain's dreadnought battleships had proved equal in design and performance, both offensively and defensively, and in many cases superior to those of Germany. The British Fifth Battle Squadron had established itself as the finest unit of dreadnoughts on either side, ruggeder and more powerful than the newest German Fifth Division; the relative merits of older units had been similar.

In signals and communication the German performance had been brilliant; in scouting and intelligence the British performance had, on the whole, been equally brilliant but marred by communication failures. The British communication problem had been several times more difficult than that of the Germans, since the complexity of wireless and signal traffic increased enormously in fleets the size of Jellicoe's.

It was during the duel between the battle-cruisers that Britain suffered the relatively heavier losses; after 6.30, when Jellicoe joined the action with the Grand Fleet, the German losses were the greater.

In regard to the fighting power of surviving ships the British superiority over the Germans was so great as to be commanding, determining British and German strategy alike, and deciding the victory. The battle-cruiser strength was most important, for though Britain had weaknesses in these ships, the weaknesses were not vital, and Britain had six battle-cruisers left, three of them untouched, all in formation ready for action; while of Germany's four survivors, none had escaped damage, only two were in formation, one was sinking, another was out of action, and only one was fully ready to fight.

As the fleets returned to port, Britain had only eight capital ships damaged, against fifteen in the enemy line; three light cruisers as against five; eight destroyers as against five. Jellicoe emerged from action with twenty-six undamaged capital ships, as compared with Scheer's six. He had a reserve (in harbour) of

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five capital ships as compared with Scheer's two. The damaged British ships were all out of the repairers' hands in full readiness for battle by the end of July; while in the High Sea Fleet *Seydlitz* did not leave the dockyard until September 16, *Derfflinger* not until October 15, and the latter was not ready for battle until December.

Not ships sunk, but ships ready to go on fighting, determined the victory.

The issue at stake had been sea-power—sea-power which one of the contestants exercised and wished to keep, which the other lacked and wished to wrest—command of the seas within and beyond the war area, of the arteries of maritime traffic and commerce vital to the destinies of both nations—the maritime highways which meant national life or death to both peoples.

At Jutland, Jellicoe demonstrated the material and strategic command of the sea's surface which Britain had achieved, with regard to Germany, by the creation of the Grand Fleet and its operation from Scapa Flow. The facts were so eloquent—even in brief, incomplected action—that the High Sea Fleet was literally swept from the seas. The German admiral was driven out of the battle area to retreat to his harbours as directly as he could, to derive his greatest fame from the fact that he retreated successfully—while the British admiral cruised as he chose in undisputed possession of the vast sea area for hours, and only turned back towards harbour after the German ships were already within their base-limits, when Jellicoe was convinced that his presence at sea was no longer necessary to manifest control.

After the experience at Jutland the High Sea Fleet never again offered action, and made only three tentative sorties into the North Sea during the entire remainder of the war—one the following August, one in October, 1916, and again for the last time in April, 1918. During the August, 1916, sortie, Scheer came within striking distance of the Grand Fleet, but the

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German ships returned to port without waiting for gun-fire. The High Sea Fleet ceased to be in any way a positive factor in German arms—its sole value became the negative fact that the Allies were required to maintain a force to match it. As a checkmated "fleet in being," it became the breeding spot of mutiny and dissolution—a greater menace to its nation's cause than the British Navy had ever been.

If Jellicoe's primary object was command of the sea, his secondary object was the destruction of enemy ships. From a military point of view this involved consideration of the cost.

There were people who claimed that it was the part of a British admiral to annihilate, at all costs, the enemy before his guns, and that Jellicoe should have closed to point-blank fighting in the fog.

Indeed, if total annihilation of the enemy fleet had been essential to command of the sea, Jellicoe would have been justified in a degree of recklessness altogether out of place at Jutland. It would have been his duty to enter the mist and give ship for ship—or more—in a gamble of fighting at close quarters.

In the actual circumstances such a *mêlée* could only have given Jellicoe what he already possessed—command of the North Sea. The moral effect of destroying the enemy would have been offset by the moral effect of the fearful destruction inevitably suffered by the Grand Fleet.

For the price Jellicoe would have paid, under the highly unfavourable conditions of military economy at Jutland, would have been the reduction of his own fleet to a weakness such that it no longer dominated the broader seas. And at the instant the Royal Navy of Great Britain ceased to be the strongest naval force in the world, Britain's Government ceased to be the pivotal point of world affairs.

There was every reason for Jellicoe to choose not to pay this price, but to lay his plans for a battle on June 1, which would

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give him both his primary and secondary objects on terms infinitely more favourable.

Jellicoe's greatness—his power—lay in an essential clarity and directness of thought. He administered a power far mightier than a fleet—he administered sea-power, in which the checking of the High Sea Fleet was only one factor, and not the most important factor at that. Jellicoe was an admiral of the modern age, thinking and acting on a strategic plane higher than that of the other naval leaders afloat in his day. At Jutland he displayed every quality of the great commander—he was a courageous, aggressive fighter, a collected and brilliant tactician, and a strategist of the first water.

He placed his ships where Germany did not want them to be—before Jutland, during Jutland, and after Jutland—and Germany beat herself to defeat against him. In turn, three German naval commanders—Ingenohl, Pohl, and Scheer—abandoned the effort to break him down.

There were two minor commanders whose qualities were demonstrated by the fighting at Jutland.

Hipper, leader of the German battle-cruisers, was the most successful of all the squadron-leaders in the action, as an actual combat fighter. He led officers and crews picked from the entire Imperial Navy and a magnificent unit of ships. He conducted his force with verve and skill, cool, collected, sure of himself in the face of manifest odds. In the opening engagement with Beatty he achieved the most successful performance by German naval ships during the war, though it did not prevent Beatty from carrying out his mission with his surviving vessels.

Beatty, courageous as a lion, was an instinctive and bulldog type of fighter—but a man betrayed by his temperament into incaution more than dangerous when the fates of nations are at stake. He had been given weapons, and failed to make use of them—given ten ships, and he chose to attack with six. He had not yet developed the breadth of conception necessary in a great commander. His, moreover, proved itself the major unit

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least trained to meet a foe against which only the highest standards would do. Beatty's defeat was made good by Jellicoe's arrival.

And Scheer?

Scheer at Jutland, as before, was the man in a strategical trap, always at the disadvantage, blockaded, oppressed. Scheer could gain nothing positive without fighting. He had everything to win—nothing to lose.

He believed that, ship for ship, he was better than the enemy. He was willing to fight. The one thing he wished to avoid was a superior enemy concentration, for he could not afford to give away his precious units for nothing.

At Jutland he learned that he had over-estimated his powers. Ship for ship he might be as good as the enemy, but he was not better, and he was fighting not individual British ships but British sea-power.

It was simple to sit down with pencil and paper and figure it out. War is largely a matter of mathematics—the cost, in men and material, of any desired victory. Had Scheer been able to reckon, after Jutland, that further fleet action would give him eventual superiority over the enemy, he would have sought battle again, and again, and again—and he might have won the war.

But at Jutland, Scheer learned that the High Sea Fleet—built in the belief that it would give Germany mastery of the seas—was not the weapon for the task.

Jutland left him with two alternatives. He could either make the High Sea Fleet stronger, a slow and colossal problem and one that would cost a national fortune at a time when the nation needed every *pfennig* of its depleted wealth, or he could abandon the attack on the enemy Battle Fleet, and, at far less expense, strike Britain with submarines at a point he believed weak to vulnerability.

Scheer was an admiral of imagination and skill. Against a lesser opponent, against poorer ships or smaller numbers, his success might have been very great. Against Beatty he might

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have won. He was a man who took advantage of every loop-hole in his opponent's armour, who twisted and turned and refused to be downed.

He had all the good qualities of great German leaders—and all their faults. His vital mistake at Jutland, and afterwards in the submarine campaign, was lack of strategical foresight. He attacked on the run, and found himself forced into precipitate retreat, where a slow, measured advance would have served him better. In its essentials, this was because he underestimated his foe, sharing the German "superman" belief which led that nation through four years and a half of colossal effort on land and sea, to a defeat which all prudent men knew was inevitable.

Jutland determined Germany's future. Its effect was decisive and fateful and influenced profoundly all the military and political events which came after it. History, in the most emphatic of terms, gave the palm of victory to Jellicoe and Britain.

PART THREE
AFTER JUTLAND

CHAPTER XXXVI

FIRST GERMAN ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE greatest of all sea battles had begun on the afternoon of Wednesday, May 31, 1916, and carried on into the early morning hours of Thursday, June 1.

Almost before the troubled, wreck-strewn battlefield in the North Sea had subsided into tranquillity and loneliness, there began an international battle of words—"Who won?" . . . "Who lost?" . . . "Who was responsible for defeat?"—waged by official, journalistic and private writers, by Government, military and commercial propaganda and publicity bureaux in half a dozen countries.

The first shot in the conflict was fired in Germany, twenty-four hours before her opponent's literary activities began. With all the advantages of the first blow, Germany scored with telling effect upon the world's opinion—upon the minds of her own people, of the neutrals, and of her enemies.

Through the hours of the fighting at Jutland the Admiralties and Governments of both Germany and Britain had lived an anguish of suspense, waiting for definite news. The public at large had been unaware that a great battle was taking place.

At noon of Thursday, June 1, while Jellicoe was still at sea in the battle area, the first units of the scarred and proved High Sea Fleet were coming into the German harbours, bringing actual details of the fighting, coloured by the German point of view, to be transmitted to the world through German agencies. Not for another twenty-four hours would the British Grand Fleet complete the long passage across the North Sea and enter British harbours with information from the British side. During

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that period Jellicoe would be completely occupied with the military problem of returning to port; could learn only from brief, signalled dispatches what had taken place beyond his sight during the battle, particularly in Beatty's command, and would be extremely chary of communicating information to London by wireless which might be intercepted by the enemy.

Distinct psychological advantages awaited the side which communicated to the world the first news that the long-awaited Battle of the North Sea had actually taken place. The German Military and Naval Propaganda Bureaux were alive to the opportunity, and hurried to strike.

By mid-afternoon of Thursday, June 1, hours before the homeward-bound Jellicoe had so much as been able to communicate a résumé of the action to London, the German Admiralty had prepared and was releasing the first official German communiqué to the news agencies—to be clicked by telegraph keys into the offices of newspapers all over the world, across the borders into Holland, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, to Austria and Hungary, simultaneously broadcast through the powerful wireless station at Nauen—the most sensational piece of news of the year.

“During an enterprise directed northward, our High Sea Fleet encountered on May 31 the main part of the English fighting fleet, which was considerably superior to our own forces. During the afternoon a series of heavy engagements developed between the Skagerrak and the Horns Reef, which were *successful for us* and which continued throughout the night. In these engagements, so far as has been learned to the present, the large British battleship *Warspite* and the battle-cruisers *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable* were destroyed, as were two armoured cruisers apparently of the *Achilles* type, one light cruiser, the new destroyer flotilla-leaders *Turbulent*, *Nestor* and *Acasta*, a large number of torpedo-boat destroyers, and one submarine. Through observations beyond challenge, it is known that a large number of English battleships suffered damage from our ships' artillery and

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from the attacks of our torpedo-boat flotillas during the day and night engagements. Among others, the large battleship *Marlborough* was struck by a torpedo, as has been confirmed by prisoners. Several of our ships rescued portions of the crews of sunken English ships, among them being the only two survivors of *Indefatigable*. On our side the light cruiser *Wiesbaden* was sunk by hostile artillery fire during the day engagements, and the *Pommern* during the night by a torpedo. The fate of *Frauenlob*, which is missing, and of some torpedo-boats, which have not yet returned, is unknown. The High Sea Fleet returned to our ports during the day."

Thus Germany lodged a claim to victory—the battle had been "successful for us." The communiqué furthered the claim by avoiding any mention of Scheer's forced retreat and by concealing the losses of *Lützow*, *Elbing* and *Rostock*, and numerous destroyers—a legitimate military censorship, in which Germany felt doubly secure because it was believed that none of the enemy had seen these ships sink.

British losses, on the other hand, were accentuated, and the list named accurately several British ships which had actually been sunk, the names having been learned by questioning British prisoners. The claim to have sunk *Warspite* was sincere, and had nothing to do with German observations of that vessel's gyrations at "Windy Corner." *Warspite's* name had been given to Hood's *Invincible*, which had been identified as a dreadnought of the *Warspite* class. Incidentally, the belief that Britain's latest dreadnoughts could be so easily blown up was causing a tremendous wave of elation in the High Sea Fleet.

On Thursday afternoon, a few minutes after the communiqué was released, the news appeared in bold-face German newspaper headlines throughout the Reichsland . . . hundreds of presses started into a roar of activity—special editions streamed off the machines and were flung into the streets. . . .

Crowds gathered at once, on street corners, at the news-kiosks, about the bawling men who cried the extras. Excited

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talk broke out. . . . "Have you heard?" . . . "*Mensch! Was für eine Nachricht!*" ("Great victory at sea!")

The Imperial Navy had shown itself the equal of the Army!

In Berlin the streets outside the great *Admiralstab* building were a swarm of people waiting further news . . . there were crowds outside the newspaper offices—the *Berliner Tageblatt*, the *8-Uhr Abendblatt*, the *Vorwärts*. . . . Above the entrance to the *Tageszeitung* a huge placard was on display—"TRAFALGAR IS WIPED OUT!" In Unter den Linden flags began to appear . . . as if by a miracle, the metropolis became a city of flags; the red-white-black flaunted from every vantage-point.

—Roars of laughter. A heavy-booted soldier on furlough from the trenches, wearing field-grey and service cap, came parading out of a shop carrying a small anchor on his shoulder—

The beer gardens and coffee houses filled with people; the restaurants were crowded.

Victory! The news was good!

By the evening of June 1, whose dawn had broken to the sound of naval gun-fire, the report of the battle had reached every city, town and village in Germany. Everywhere it stirred the same sensation. Bulletins were posted in front of town halls and post offices. The Government's tremendous machinery of propaganda was at work, stirring the spirit of the nation with the golden vision of success, making an imprint so deep that it was to become indelibly graven into the national consciousness, to withstand all later facts, all reason.

The fleet had won.

Thus a myth was born.

Editors vied in printing resonant phrases to "describe" the action. The term "Victory" was too modest. "Triumph" . . . "Annihilation" . . . "Extinction" were more adequate. Type columns teemed with invective, expressions of loathing for everything British. One editor spoke of "the arrogant presumption of the British 'rats' who have left their safe hiding-

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places, only to be trapped by German efficiency, heroism and determination."

For years the average German had envied Britain's sea-power with a jealousy tempered by admiration. Now the nation was being told that Britain's fleet was no longer to be respected. It was natural that envy vanished, turned to exultant hatred. The trenches were forgotten in the thought of the sea. . . .

On Thursday evening, in Berlin, diagrammatic charts of a battle which had required nearly twelve hours in the fighting, and of which no details were as yet known, were being prepared under press-room arc-lamps by over-driven newspaper staff artists. The same evening they were being distributed in the streets, to be taken home and pored over by young widows, middle-aged labourers, threadbare shop assistants. Heavy black anchors denoted British losses—a few tiny Maltese crosses marked the German sinkings, most of the latter qualified as "doubtful."

The occasion found Germany's organization for propaganda well prepared, unified, and swift to act. The Admiralty's communiqué sounded the keynote; the national Press fell into line with perfect discipline and without questioning the accuracy of the official statement.

Good news was essential to the morale of a nation at war.

In response, the telegraph wires leading to the naval bases hummed with congratulatory messages—messages from Government officials, from the Reichstag, the Army, the *Flottenverein*, from private citizens, patriotic organizations, members of the clergy, from the Austrian Navy, the Austrian Emperor

Simultaneously, telegrams were travelling away from the naval bases to all parts of Germany, to bring to women the news that their husbands and sons had fallen in the great sea fight.

Perhaps to-morrow's holiday, proclaimed to celebrate the victory, would comfort the unsuspecting, fatherless children of the war generation.

The grief of the few was lost in the exultation of the majority.

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The German communiqué arrived in foreign capitals too late to appear in the Thursday evening newspapers.

Night editors studied it carefully, studied the bulletins which followed it.

The word "victory" had not been officially employed, yet there was every implication that Germany had won one of the most unexpected and momentous naval triumphs in the history of the world.

What would the British bulletins say?

As yet no British bulletins had come.

Some editors prepared headlines announcing a striking German victory. Others tempered their statements, advising the public to withhold final judgment until news had arrived from British sources.

Friday morning's newspapers brought the news to the neutral countries—to Scandinavia, Holland, to the Orient, to distant Buenos Ayres, to North America and Spain.

"British Losses Great!" "British Suffer Severe Set-Back At Sea." "British Fleet Almost Annihilated!" . . . "Issue of Conflict at Sea Still in Doubt."

In New York and Chicago people woke to the shouting of "*Ux-tra! Ux-tra!*" In Wall Street the news caused active selling of stocks—the market dropped sharply.

Sensational rumours were afoot. What effect would the battle have on the fortunes of the Allies? British news and comment were awaited eagerly.

It was Friday, June the 2nd. The battle had been fought on May 31.

But all day Friday no news came from British sources.

Did London's silence mean confirmation of the German news?

CHAPTER XXXVII

FIRST BRITISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

IN London, at the Admiralty, no definite news as to the outcome of the battle had arrived from the fighting forces on the evening of Thursday, June 1.

All day the Admiralty had been intercepting wireless messages between Jellicoe and Beatty, between Jellicoe and other subordinate commanders, referring to the losses of various British ships and to the search of the battle area. The direction-finders had traced the German fleet back to Wilhelmshaven, while intercepted German messages had indicated the loss of several German units. It appeared obvious that the battle had left Jellicoe in good order and great strength, in undisputed command of the sea, but no direct report had as yet been received from the Commander-in-Chief. It was known that the Grand Fleet was now on its way home, and would arrive in British harbours the next morning. There had been nothing in the intercepted messages to cause undue anxiety, but the curiosity and eagerness to learn more about the fighting could not have been greater.

Outside the Admiralty, no one except the King, the members of the Government, a few naval officials, and a few trusted individuals knew that the fleet had been in action.

On Thursday evening London received, via Holland, the text of the German official communiqué, cabled into Reuter's News Agency and dispatched at once by special messenger to "Room 37" in the Admiralty building at Whitehall, for censorship before release to the Press.

In the absence of contrary news from the British Commander-in-Chief the claim to German victory produced a stunning effect.

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The censor on duty handed the translated German text to his assistant and the two men discussed the situation. What was to be done? It was out of the question to release such important information to the newspapers without higher authority. They telephoned to the Chief Naval Censor, Captain Sir Douglas Brownrigg, immediately for instructions.

Captain Brownrigg decided that for the time being the German dispatch must be suppressed and kept from the newspapers. At 9.20 p.m., after taking the matter up officially, the Admiralty wirelessed Jellicoe a summary of the German claims, and asked him for a definite report of lost and missing British ships, warning him that rumours and false reports would soon be abroad which would require instant counteraction. The message made no mention of German losses, and asked for no information on that score.

. . . Anxious hours while London slept.

At daylight, Friday morning, June the 2nd, the Admiralty had received no reply from Jellicoe.

Travellers and mail would soon begin to arrive from the Continent. The German communiqué could not be suppressed indefinitely. Many of the newspapers had special correspondents in Holland and Scandinavia. There were certain to be "leaks."

During the morning damaged British ships would begin coming into the British East coast harbours, bringing visible evidence of the battle. Sensational reports of a British defeat were already being circulated in Edinburgh, due to the preparations being made at Rosyth to receive the injured battle-cruisers.

By eight o'clock rumours were abroad in London of a sea fight "somewhere in the North Sea."

By nine o'clock Beatty had anchored to the accompaniment of a distressing incident—a group of dockyard workers had hissed and jeered the crews of the returning ships. The first of six thousand telegraph messages from officers and men,

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announcing their safety to their relatives, had been sent ashore from Beatty's unit, and had reached its destination before the Admiralty's machinery of censorship was set in motion.

It was out of the question to try to keep the public in ignorance any longer. The Press was crowding outside the entrance to the Chief Censor's office demanding information.

Accordingly, between 10 and 11 o'clock on Friday morning, June the 2nd, the Admiralty decided to release the German communiqué to the British Press.

The German report was published at once by means of stop-press editions. London, all England, learned that a great battle had been fought in the North Sea—received the first news *via* Wilhelmshaven and Berlin, in terms favourable to Germany and claiming German success over a superior British fleet. This was a triumph for German publicity and one that Berlin could hardly have anticipated.

But the Admiralty, still without definite information from the Grand Fleet, had felt that there was no other choice.

The man in Britain's streets formed his first opinion of the Battle of Jutland from the German information. He was shocked, angered and disappointed. His pride was wounded. He wanted instant news from the British Admiralty—a positive and immediate denial.

Only a powerful statement, backed by details of German losses, could counteract the effect of the German communiqué upon the public.

A mantle of expectant silence shrouded the country. Thousands of people, many of them women, were gathering outside the Inquiry Office at the Admiralty, waiting for details of the battle and for news of their men.

Why had the Admiralty allowed the German report to be published without issuing a communiqué of its own? Why was there no news from British sources? Had there actually been a great defeat? The newspaper offices were

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besieged with telephone calls. A ferment of suspicion and distrust had been stirred in that powerful flux, British public opinion—it would be many years before the effects died away.

Shortly before 11 o'clock on Friday morning, June 2, Jellicoe's reply to the Admiralty's inquiry reached London. The Grand Fleet was just coming to anchor at Scapa Flow.

The Commander-in-Chief's message, shaped by the information asked of him, concerned itself almost entirely with details of British losses and only briefly summarized the action in general terms. Enemy losses were mentioned, but treated most conservatively, likewise in general terms without mentioning the definite name of any German ship. The British Battle Fleet had been only "a short time in action."

In Whitehall's uncertain and agitated atmosphere, Jellicoe's words appeared more or less to confirm the German communiqué. No one stopped to think that Jellicoe was merely answering questions which had been put to him, that he had not yet seen the actual text of the German statement, and was unconscious of the uncertainty at the Admiralty.

The result was a state of confusion and cross-purposes between London and Scapa, in which the Admiralty decided that Jellicoe had actually emerged on the unfortunate end of the battle and needed official protection, at least until the public had recovered from the shock.

The newspapers were clamouring. An official statement must be issued at once, in words chosen with care and thought, based upon the scanty information at hand. For more than three hours on Friday afternoon, June 2, the best brains which the Admiralty commanded—Mr. Balfour, the First Lord; Admiral Sir Henry Jackson, the First Sea Lord; and Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Oliver, the Chief of Staff—worked over the draft of a British communiqué. It was typed by a clerk, scrutinized for the last time. Finally, at 7 p.m. on Friday evening,

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forty-eight hours after the decisive and victorious events at "Windy Corner," a messenger gave it into the hands of the expectant Press.

The first British communiqué, if bluntly honest, could not have been more unfortunately worded. It appeared in the morning newspapers on Saturday, June 3:—

"On the afternoon of Wednesday, May 31, a naval engagement took place off the coast of Jutland. The British ships on which the brunt of the fighting fell were the Battle-Cruiser Fleet, and some cruisers and light cruisers supported by four fast battleships. Among these the losses were heavy. The German battle-fleet, aided by low visibility, avoided prolonged action with our main forces, and soon after these appeared on the scene the enemy returned to port, though not before receiving severe damage from our battleships. The battle-cruisers *Queen Mary*, *Indefatigable*, *Invincible*, and the cruisers *Defence* and *Black Prince* were sunk. The *Warrior* was disabled, and after being towed for some time, had to be abandoned by her crew. It is also known that the destroyers *Tipperary*, *Turbulent*, *Fortune*, *Sparrowhawk* and *Ardent* were lost, and six others are not yet accounted for. No British battleships or light cruisers were sunk. The enemy's losses are serious. At least one battle-cruiser was destroyed; one battleship reported sunk by our destroyers during a night attack; two light cruisers were disabled and probably sunk. The exact number of enemy destroyers disposed of during the action cannot be ascertained with any certainty, but it must have been large."

This communiqué, avoiding almost ostentatiously any utterance as to the question of victory or defeat, appeared a complete confirmation of the German claims. It published freely the names of many British ships sunk, making it seem that seventeen British ships had been lost, while referring to four or more probable enemy losses and calling these "serious." In comparison with the strong German statement, the British communiqué was utterly devoid of imagination and of the workings of national psychology.

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Taken together, the British and German communiqués made a redoubtable and double impression upon British opinion. If the German public had been encouraged to believe, unwarrantably, that they had won a great victory, the British public was encouraged to believe in a great defeat, and having adopted this idea, clung to it stubbornly. In 1916 people lived in a harsh present, in which sensational news had an effect that could not be lessened by subsequent correction.

Before the British communiqué reached print, fresh news was coming into the Admiralty. Three times during the evening of June 2 Jellicoe sent further messages confirming his own losses and stating conservatively his definite and most recent knowledge of the losses of the enemy. Shortly after midnight a long report was received from Admiral Beatty.

On the basis of this additional news, the Admiralty issued a second bulletin at 1.15 a.m., Saturday, June 3, stating that the total loss in British destroyers amounted to eight boats . . . one enemy dreadnought-battleship of the *Kaiser*-class was believed to have been sunk by gunfire . . . of three enemy battle-cruisers (two of them believed to be *Derfflinger* and *Lützow*), one had been blown up, another was seen to be disabled, and the third was observed to be seriously damaged . . . one German light cruiser and six German destroyers were sunk . . . at least two more light cruisers were seen to be disabled . . . repeated hits had been observed on three of the German battleships . . . and, finally, a German submarine had been rammed and sunk.

The Admiralty was still clinging to a heavy caution, and still uttered no official opinion as to the success or failure of the engagement. In response to the Press's questions, unofficial announcement was made that no stand could be taken, one way or the other, on the matter of victory—no word contained in the bulletins would be modified.

The British Press had come to the conclusion that the Admiralty was bringing a piece of bad news to the country in

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an extremely clumsy manner. That the news was bad there no longer seemed any doubt. That there was need to present it in such blunt and discouraging terms appeared, however, open to question. A sensitive reaction to public opinion and a skilled knowledge of propaganda warned Britain's newspaper writers and editors that it was high time to begin printing reassuring statements, to counteract the shock to the public and parry the German claims, which were growing more exaggerated every hour.

But the journalists' assumption that the battle had been a British defeat now set in motion a second train of cross-purposes, this time between the newspapers and the Admiralty, since with every hour the Admiralty was growing more and more convinced that the initial German announcement had been misleading, that the Grand Fleet had successfully and decisively accomplished its mission at sea, and that the only fact of true sting to Britain was the apparent and unexpected failure of Beatty and his battle-cruisers to deliver as much punishment as they had received.

With every hour the journalists were growing more and more convinced that the initial German announcement had been correct and that the Admiralty was concealing the truth. A large section of the Press was in political opposition to the Government, and to the Admiralty's First Lord. The newspapers could no longer be satisfied with general statements. They wanted facts. They wanted to be given access to the details of the battle, including the admirals' reports, and make suggestions as to the best way of nursing the public through a bitter disappointment.

The newspapers believed there must be official and immediate action to convince the public that the defeat could not be repeated. Heads must come off. Britain's admiral must be called to account—if necessary, relieved of his command.

With odd human blindness the Press was not thinking of Beatty in its demand for a scapegoat. It was in Beatty's forces that the heavy British loss had occurred, but the popular

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Beatty was secure in a niche of newspaper admiration and friendship. Beatty must have been the under-dog in the battle, placed against tremendous odds—how else explain his losses? All sympathy to him. There must be good and sufficient reason for everything that had happened to Beatty. But Jellicoe? Why hadn't Jellicoe avenged Beatty? If anyone had made a colossal failure, it had been Jellicoe——

This instant readiness to spare Beatty and focus upon Jellicoe was the sequence to the unfriendly opinion many of the newspaper men had of the Commander-in-Chief, arising from Jellicoe's notorious dislike of the visits of reporters to Scapa Flow, his feeling that newspaper men had no business in the fleet, his steadfast refusal to allow permanent newspaper correspondents aboard his flagship. The admiral's desire for naval secrecy, coupled with his inherent personal reserve, had alienated the sympathies of the men to whom the writing of naval news was duty, bread and butter.

Behind closed doors a few of the leading correspondents sought a solution to their problem. One fact appeared self-evident. The enemy had been met by a superior British force—the enemy had escaped. Both British and German communiqués agreed on this point. They decided to suggest to the Admiralty the issue of a statement saying that the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, had been summoned to London to explain the escape of the enemy.

The Admiralty rejected the suggestion. Such a step would imply a censure of the Commander-in-Chief, and the Admiralty found no reason why Jellicoe should be censured.

What? Did not the enemy's escape demand some form of censure? Where had Jellicoe been? The list of casualties did not include the loss or apparent damage of a single capital ship in the Grand Fleet main body! If the Germans were allowed to persist in claiming a great sea success, and no steps were taken to make the public feel that this could not be repeated, the damage to morale on the Allied side and the discredit to Great Britain's

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prestige abroad might be too devastating to contemplate. Kitchener's Army was just getting to the front; Verdun was making its last stand. The Admiralty must understand that the situation was serious—something positive must be done.

The crux of the situation appeared to be this. All announcements up to now made it appear that Beatty had got into action, while Jellicoe had not. Beatty had fought; the Grand Fleet had not fought. That was the point which must be explained. It was ridiculous to expect people to believe that the Germans could break off a battle at any moment it became inconvenient for them to continue it. Had Jellicoe simply let them go back to harbour without making any effort to prevent their escape?

There were two alternatives. One was to accept the battle as a British defeat—to adopt the attitude that the Grand Fleet had failed to do its duty and fight, and that there must be an instant and sweeping inquiry, presumably leading to a change in the fleet command.

Or the other choice was to shroud Jellicoe and the Grand Fleet, for the time being, in a mantle of charitable silence, and for purposes of propaganda to launch a fictitious but satisfying narrative that would reassure the public—to create a myth in Beatty's name—to announce that Admiral Beatty had courageously attacked and repulsed the entire German High Sea Fleet with his small, greatly outnumbered force of battle-cruisers—had sent the Germans flying for port before him—to treat the battle as a decisive British victory, and make Beatty its hero.

The Admiralty remained unmoved. The official communiqués would not be modified until further information was received, nor would an official opinion be expressed. The Admiralty felt no reason for concern.

The correspondents construed this attitude as thrusting upon themselves the responsibility for taking a definite stand.

The conference was at an end.

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On Saturday afternoon, June 3, the first British counter to Germany's Jutland propaganda appeared, and it originated not in official sources, but at the hands of a group of newspaper correspondents who were acting upon surmise and possessed no knowledge of the true situation. Their motives were patriotic; they felt that they were dealing in the interests of the nation; they were entirely correct in realizing that some form of British propaganda was urgently necessary; but they launched the second great misstatement about the Battle of Jutland, and proceeded with all skill to persuade the world to accept it as fact. Germany had set in motion the first untruth—that the battle had been a German victory. Millions of people now believed this statement. British writers were responsible for the second myth—that Beatty had achieved a brilliant personal success at Jutland, and had been the battle's outstanding and triumphant figure.

In Saturday afternoon's British newspapers, statements began to appear describing the incomparable fight of Beatty's British battle-cruisers against the flower of the German fleet. The small group of writers, who had up to now criticized Beatty for apparently rash tactics and the loss of ships, were personally approached and urged to adopt the new standpoint. The Press must stand together—the public needed buoying up—the Admiralty's ineptness must be made good.

By Saturday night Beatty's name was spread before Britain's eyes . . . the conduct of his battle-cruisers was on Britain's lips—for thirty-six hours Britain had talked of nothing but the battle. Here was a ray of comfort. The "truth" was beginning to come out.

So Beatty had been the bull-dog who stood up to the German fleet—always in the thick of it, that chap! Never afraid to attack!

But where had Jellicoe been? What had been the matter with the Grand Fleet? There was a mystery somewhere—something was being concealed.

Beatty was the man of the hour, with a halo of courage and

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success—Jellicoe was the uncertain quantity. . . . Printer's ink poured into the extra editions, and still the public demanded fuller details.

At about 2 p.m., Saturday afternoon, June 3, the Admiralty received a dispatch from Jellicoe, commenting in decidedly unfavourable terms upon the first British communiqué, saying that it magnified British losses, minimized those of the enemy, and in general gave a very false and misleading picture of the action.

Simultaneously it became evident to the Admiralty that the sensational direction being taken by the Press's propaganda would lead to erroneous public judgment and opinion. The triple misunderstanding between Scapa Flow, the Admiralty and the newspapers was now making itself felt with full effect.

The Admiralty decided upon a step to clear the atmosphere. They would ask Mr. Winston Churchill, colourful and popular politician, who had been First Lord of the Admiralty from 1911 until recently, to examine all the confidential reports of the battle and publish his unbiased opinion in to-morrow's (Sunday) newspapers. No one could question Mr. Churchill's honesty and integrity or challenge the truth of what he wrote. His comments would be widely read, not only at home but abroad, where the Press, after the first British announcements, had felt justified in assuming that the Grand Fleet had been defeated, so that American and continental messages of sympathy were pouring into London—it was obvious that the world reaction had been unfavourable to the Allied cause.

On Saturday afternoon Mr. Churchill was given access to the reports of the fleet commanders as well as all other information in possession of the Admiralty.

His well-written commentary, appearing on Sunday, stressed the point that control of the sea depended upon the super-dreadnought battleship, and that British supremacy in these vessels had not been impaired. True, Britain had lost the

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battle-cruiser *Queen Mary*, but the Germans had lost one comparable unit—either *Lützow* or *Derfflinger*—and in comparison the German loss was the heavier. In vessels of the second and third order (including the older battle-cruisers *Invincible* and *Indefatigable*) the respective losses balanced, if not in numbers, at least in importance. Destroyer casualties appeared about equal. The British margin of superiority at sea remained in no way impaired. . . . Troops would continue to move with the utmost freedom, “the battered condition of the German fleet being an additional security to us.” He wrote of the “hazy weather, the fall of night, and the retreat of the enemy,” which “frustrated the persevering efforts of our brilliant commanders, Sir John Jellicoe and Sir David Beatty, to force a final decision.” . . . He wrote of the impossibility of compelling the German fleet to accept battle. . . . He wrote of the vindication of all hopes reposed in Beatty’s fast divisions. . . . “All classes of vessels on both sides have now met, and we know that there are no surprises or unforeseen features—” . . . He closed with a tribute to the gallant sailors who had lost their lives, and with expressions of sympathy for the bereaved ones at home.

This clear and comprehensive view of the situation, rendered by an able pen, had an immediately beneficial effect upon opinion, both in Britain and abroad, but one of its unexpected results was to bring down upon the Admiralty, as well as upon Mr. Churchill, a violent storm of protest from the daily Press, which in turn reawakened the public’s suspicions and mistrust.

Why, demanded the correspondents, had the Press been denied access to the admirals’ official reports, while this privilege had been granted to Mr. Churchill, an ex-Minister? Full details should long since have been placed in the trustworthy and capable hands of the newspaper representatives, who were the legitimate guardians of the public interest. The Admiralty’s behaviour was singular and most irregular. Was it possible that the Admiralty was shielding someone, concealing certain important information? What was the mystery at Whitehall?

“Mystery!”

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If there had been failure, either at the Admiralty or in the fleet, it must be rooted out. A free and patriotic Press would not allow itself to be stifled by a governmental bureaucracy.

The campaign which featured Beatty and the battle-cruisers was enlarged to include sharp criticism of the Admiralty and a demand that all the facts of the battle be published.

Monday, the 5th of June. The beginning of another week—the 95th week of the World War . . . the fifth day after the battle—

The Admiralty's third official communiqué, released the previous night, appeared in the morning newspapers. It stated that any attempt to give a detailed account of the naval engagement would be premature. "But," it said, "the results are quite plain." The action was referred to as "vigorous," the losses as "severe on both sides." The bulletin could neither add to, nor subtract from, the British losses. It mentioned the difficulty of determining, exactly, the losses of the enemy; yet it entertained no doubt that the German losses had been heavier than those of the British, "not merely relatively, but absolutely." It felt safe in claiming, among the enemy losses, two battleships as well as two battle-cruisers, the light cruisers *Wiesbaden* and *Elbing*, one light cruiser of the *Rostock* type, the *Frauenlob* light cruiser, at least nine destroyers and a submarine.

Britain was at last departing from the conservative in estimating enemy losses, and was claiming, in a belated official attempt to sway public opinion, as much damage as possible. The four or more ships of the original bulletin had become eighteen. And at last the Admiralty was stressing the crux of the situation in these words:—

" . . . When the main body of the British Fleet came into contact with the German High Sea Fleet, a very brief period sufficed to compel the latter, who had been severely punished, to seek refuge in their protected waters. This manœuvre was rendered possible by low visibility and mist. . . . Sir John Jellicoe, having driven the enemy into port, returned to the

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main scene of action and scanned the sea in search of disabled vessels. . . ."

At last Whitehall and Scapa Flow were acting in harmony and understanding. This was precisely the bulletin which should have been issued as Britain's first announcement. In that event there would never have been any Jutland controversy, any Jutland "mystery," any Jutland "scandal," any public agitation over this most successful British achievement. But seventy-two hours of confusion had done the mischief.

As it was, it was a more cheerful Briton who sipped his Monday morning cup of tea, the newspaper spread before him. This was better news. His favourite editor, somewhat relieved from the strain of stressing the Beatty myth, now adopted the editorial attitude that the enemy's retreat, the "taking refuge in their protected waters," was adequate proof that Germany had been defeated. . . . The reader was reminded of the historically famous bulletin, whose effect had endured so long, stating that the Frenchman Villeneuve had defeated Nelson at Trafalgar.

But in the fresh details of the actual fighting, the note which had been struck on Saturday continued. Beatty's name was still mentioned ten times to Jellicoe's once. There were now minute descriptions of enemy ships being blown up before Beatty's "gallant Balaclava charge"; there were personal narratives telling the experiences of officers and seamen in the British battle-cruisers. There was a Roll of Honour—endless, so it seemed to the reader. His reactions were those of heat and cold.

Monday's dispatches from abroad were more encouraging. Russia expressed pride "in the ability of the British navy to resist an attack." . . . Italy referred to the German communiqué as "hurried," although undeniably making an impression—Italy had advised waiting for further information and had counselled faith in the "majestic calm of the British public. Rule, Britannia!". . . Denmark had been sceptical of the German

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reports from the beginning. . . . The United States felt that the battle's significant points were the retreat of the German fleet and the demonstration of Britain's dominion of the seas. . . . From France: "The naval battle was won, for the blockade continues." . . . Australia lamented the heavy sacrifice of life to "ensure the British fleet still proudly riding the seas."

But there were innumerable and unconsoling comments as to the rapidity with which *Queen Mary*, *Indefatigable* and *Invincible* had sunk—this was the source of world speculation and rumour, and the suspicion that British material was inferior to Germany's.

Except upon the one point—the details and causes of the sudden sinking of the three battle-cruisers, which must remain an official secret—the Admiralty decided on Monday to answer the Press's clamourings by removing all censorship concerning the battle, and making available the confidential reports to the newspaper correspondents. It was felt that as matters stood, open criticism and publicity based upon fact would be less dangerous than a continuance of the rumours based on surmise. The Admiralty had recovered from its first shock, and was sure of the success of the navy's achievement. The navy belonged to the nation—the public had a right to share the details of the triumph.

The first newspaper correspondents were actually examining the records, when information of this step reached Jellicoe at Scapa Flow, and the Commander-in-Chief made instant, vigorous protest.

Jellicoe, isolated from the London scene and more than ever out of sympathy with the newspapers as a result of their rush to discredit the fleet—which had stung the entire navy to the core with a sense of bitter injustice—was deeply concerned by the intelligence which must reach the enemy if there were general, free publicity. There must be continued strict censorship, not only of the facts released

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to the Press, but of the details allowed to pass in the fleet's letters home.

Jellicoe's telegram reached London at noon, and the Admiralty immediately reimposed complete censorship.

Newspaper protests followed at once. During the brief period of freedom two or three correspondents had been admitted to knowledge which was now denied to others. This brought charges of rank discrimination. What had been revealed to some, must be revealed to all.

The renewed, unexplained Admiralty silence, the sharp newspaper criticism in almost all Monday's morning and evening editions, led to a fresh weakening of public confidence which undid almost all the good effects of Mr. Churchill's Sunday statement and the third official communiqué.

The newspapers now demanded "full publication of the commanders' dispatches." The public was advised to defer final judgment on the conflict until they had been given opportunity to read the actual, uncensored words of Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty. The Admiralty's bulletins were not to be trusted—the question of the battle losses was most unsatisfactory—there was a great difference between "estimated losses" and "definitely reported facts."

Monday morning's optimism was apparently out of place. It did not give way to a feeling of abject pessimism, but rather to resolute British prudence. The determination to "carry on" became grimmer.

Wednesday's newspapers brought a stunning shock—news of the death by drowning of Lord Kitchener, lost at sea with his entire staff while entrusted to the Royal Navy. He had been embarked in the cruiser *Hampshire* on an urgent military mission, and the ship had gone to the bottom after striking an enemy mine in circumstances which made rescue impossible. Only twelve men of her company had been saved. Actually, the mine was one of those laid by the German submarine *U-75*, west of the Orkney Islands, as a part of Scheer's pre-Jutland activities.

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Kitchener's death, a national loss, led to the most extraordinary rumours of treachery and naval incapacity, among them the widely-believed statement that the British Grand Fleet was alive with enemy agents who communicated all its most intimate secrets and plans to Germany, and had made possible Scheer's escape at Jutland. The sinking of the *Hampshire* became indelibly connected with the public uncertainty as to the battle—it was impossible to divorce the news of the great soldier's loss from the results of the previous week's naval action.

At a luncheon in London on the same day, Mr. Balfour, the First Lord of the Admiralty, addressed the British Imperial Chamber of Commerce. He spoke of the "recent victorious engagement," and took upon himself full blame for the manner in which the Admiralty communiqués had been handled, defending the actions of that body in dealing so straightforwardly and fairly with the public, and regretting that such candour had had adverse effects. He called down upon the heads of newspaper editors "a little passing prick of conscience" for their criticism levelled at the Admiralty and the fleet, as well as their premature desire to publish "an exciting bit of news." He mentioned the Commander-in-Chief, Jellicoe; the latter's many burdensome duties would require attention prior to the compilation of his eagerly expected "report." Beatty's name was not mentioned. Mr. Balfour defended the Admiralty's choice of Mr. Churchill as the proper man to prepare and write a first summary of the action, and closed with references to the "vanished dream of invasion" and the end of sea hopes on the part of the enemy, the tightened blockade, and the relation of the naval battle to the world contest.

This speech, given publicity throughout the Empire and the world, did much to create a clearer perspective, so far as the public was concerned, both as to the engagement and the manner in which the Admiralty had first announced it.

Yet, quite naturally, Mr. Balfour's words failed to placate the Press. The newspapers referred editorially to his comments

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as "strange" and claimed that the official announcements, as well as the official silences—and *not* the opinions of the newspapers—were responsible for the totally unnecessary shock of distress which had been felt from one end of the Empire to the other.

Writers upon naval affairs would carry the fight from the waters of the North Sea to the thresholds of Whitehall!

CHAPTER XXXVIII

SCHEER REPORTS

THERE had been no diminution of the elation in Germany. The claims to victory had grown more vehement as the Government wrung the last drop from the publicity possibilities of the battle, stressing, as always, the question of comparative losses.

Friday's national holiday was followed by a day of official mourning on Sunday, when the fleet's dead were buried with all ceremony in the Naval Cemetery at Wilhelmshaven. On Monday the Emperor made a formal visit to the fleet; the crews of the ships were assembled, and Wilhelm read a long, carefully prepared speech, its subject, the titanic struggle at sea, its closing words: "The British fleet was beaten!" The crews responded with cheers for Kaiser, Vaterland, und Hochseeflotte!

Admirals Scheer and Hipper received the Order *Pour la Mérite*, Germany's supreme military decoration, from the Emperor's hands. Vice-Admiral Scheer was promoted to be an admiral; Rear-Admiral Hipper was promoted to be vice-admiral. Officers and men who had distinguished themselves in action received decorations commensurate with their achievements. Tribute was paid to Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, builder of the fleet, and to the firm of Krupp and the various other shipbuilders and arms manufacturers who had produced the ships. On a visit to the Naval Cemetery, the Emperor deposited a wreath in honour of the fallen.

All Germany celebrated.

Further honours were in store for the High Sea Fleet's leaders. Ludwig III, King of Bavaria, recognizing the achievements of his subjects, elevated Admiral Hipper to the nobility, decorating

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him with the Cross of the Commander of the Military Order of Max Josef. From Tuesday, June 6, onward, Hipper became Vice-Admiral Baron von Hipper. The patent of nobility was likewise proffered to Admiral Scheer, but for reasons of his own he signified that he would prefer not to accept the title.

A generally optimistic spirit was in the land. Except among the Radical parties, constituting the Government's inconsequential opposition, the naval "victory" had been accepted as fact.

In Socialist and Labour circles, however, there was doubt that the German losses had been so light as the official statements indicated. The loss of *Lützow* had leaked from the fleet and gained a wide circle of believers as it travelled through the country by word of mouth. The publication of Britain's third communiqué had led to demands for German confirmation or denial from the neutral countries. At length the naval command had been forced to reveal an additional list of losses.

The delayed publication of this list led to suspicion, particularly abroad, that the original German communiqué had been untrue. The end of a week saw a considerable reversal of neutral opinion and the growth of an underground current in Germany, which persisted despite all the Government's statements.

Before the end of the war, the claims to "victory" had reverberated upon Germany's head with heavy impact, and her revolutionaries secured wide belief for stories such as the statement that *Lützow*, in being hastened to the bottom with German torpedoes, had been sent down without waiting to rescue a large number of seamen trapped alive below decks.

But in the Germany of 1916 the average citizen accepted the Government's statements blindly. There were none so unseeing as the official visitors to Wilhelmshaven, who could not guess what lay behind the sheets of canvas which covered the battered hulls and superstructures of fighting ships waiting their turn in the dockyard; none so ignorant as the citizens who could not pass the sentries guarding the basins where *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* lay for month after month.

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Several weeks went by before Admiral Scheer's official report, addressed to "Your Royal and Imperial Majesty," was completed in a form carefully phrased for public consumption, and, on July 4, released to the nation. The summary of the losses on both sides, now fully revealed, spelled only too truly the comparative destruction of tonnage—two tons to one in Germany's favour. Sinkings, the destruction of ships—these counted for a great deal in naval battle—and upon these the report was based.

Once more German public enthusiasm grew and spread. The nation decided more firmly than ever that Germany actually possessed a small, tremendously efficient fleet, which was capable of victory over the larger, but less skilful and less resolute, opponent.

Yet Scheer's closing words were: "A victorious termination of the war . . . can only be attained . . . by the employment of submarines . . ." and with these words the admiral echoed the death-blow dealt to the aspirations of his fleet, if not to its spirit, five weeks earlier.

CHAPTER XXXIX

JELlicoe REPORTS

IRON DUKE. 18th June, 1916. Sir: Be pleased to inform the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that in accordance with instructions . . . the Grand Fleet proceeded to sea on 30th May, 1919. . . .”

Admiral Jellicoe's voluminous official report of the battle contained, in addition to his own detailed summary of events, a number of appended enclosures—the narrative accounts of the action by all the commanding British admirals and captains, charts of battle formations and the track of the operations, lists of enemy vessels sunk, of British vessels sunk, of all the British ships which took part in the action, and a report relative to explosions in the mine-fields laid by *Abdiel*.

For three weeks the Press and the public had eagerly awaited this communication—but as it reached the Admiralty, Whitehall was faced with an exceptionally difficult task. In its present form the report could not be published. It was full of confidential information which must not, in any circumstances, reach the enemy. Before release, the report must be completely revised and edited.

Jellicoe had commented freely upon “the indifferent armour protection of our battle-cruisers, particularly as regards turret-armour and deck-plating”; upon the very high standard of German gunnery in the early phases of the action, and the excellent German organization with regard to night recognition signals (in comparison with which “ours is practically nil”). He spoke of the impossibility of countering a “turn away” movement of the enemy unless ample time and superior speed were available, which meant that “unless the meeting of the

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fleets takes place fairly early in the day, it is most difficult, if not impossible, to fight the action to a finish."

The report mentioned by name many British destroyers whose existence had never been officially divulged and were presumably unknown to the enemy. The list of dreadnoughts, light cruisers and flotilla-leaders contained similar naval secrets.

Simultaneously there arose the question of preparing an official chart of the battle for publication, to prevent the appearance of fictitious newspaper or private charts, prepared on the basis of the text, which might be referred to to support "this or that line of criticism."

Jellicoe and Beatty were summoned to London to discuss the matter. After long labour, the edited dispatch and the chart were agreed upon by all parties.

The *Third Supplement* (published on July 6) to the *London Gazette* of Tuesday, the 4th of July, 1916, contained Jellicoe's report in the form in which it was released for general consumption. It appeared almost simultaneously with Admiral Scheer's.

As before, the British admiral's communication was addressed to the Secretary of the Admiralty, who would "be pleased to inform the Lords Commissioners . . . that the German High Sea Fleet was brought to action on 31st May, 1916, to the westward of the Jutland Bank, off the coast of Denmark." The report was dated "*Iron Duke*, June 24th, 1916," and signed "J. R. Jellicoe, Admiral, Commander-in-Chief." Beatty's report, upon which much of the subject matter of Jellicoe's was based, was appended.

On the next day, July 7, the report was reprinted in the newspapers, together with the chart, and the text of a letter from the Admiralty to Admiral Jellicoe, conveying their Lordships' full approval of the conduct of the fleet in the action. The Admiralty Press Bureau simultaneously released an "appreciation" of the battle.

Set in small type, the eagerly awaited dispatch covered two full newspaper pages. If long and technical, it made interesting

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reading. For more than a month the British nation and the world had anticipated its publication, hoping for a solution of the Jutland "mystery."

With regard to British losses, no additions or subtractions were made. The previously published summaries were final and correct. With regard to enemy losses, the report stated that three battleships, one battle-cruiser, five light cruisers, six destroyers and one submarine had been "seen to sink," while, in addition, it seemed "extremely doubtful" if one further battleship, one battle-cruiser, and three destroyers could have reached harbour in view of the apparent extent of their damage. Thus, the final British contention was that twenty-one enemy vessels had been sunk as against fourteen British. This was accepted by the greater part of the British and neutral public until the end of the war, since Germany's initial claim that she had lost only two ships, and subsequent revelation of much heavier losses, had led to a general discounting of German figures and an equal confidence in Britain's.

From first to last, Jellicoe's dispatch spelled a British victory. It gave a clear conception of the general character of the great action. Though written in uninspired language, it was, nevertheless, capable of stirring in the reader a sense of the drama and colour of the long-range combat between ponderous ships, the hand-to-hand duelling of frenzied destroyers rushing to the attack. Throughout the length of the report one "felt" the element of uncertainty caused by the mist and smoke. Those torpedo-craft especially distinguished by their gallant behaviour were mentioned by name; there was no complete list of the British ships engaged. There was no reference to the insufficient armour protection of the battle-cruisers, no discussion of the enemy "turn-away," nor of the supremacy of German gunnery in the early phases, nor the inferior British organization for night recognition signals.

Jellicoe was generous in his mention of Sir David Beatty's "fine qualities of gallant leadership, firm determination and correct strategic insight"; equally generous and unstinting in his

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praise of the conduct of officers and men throughout all stages of the action.

Beatty's appended report, addressed to the Commander-in-Chief and dated on board the *Lion* on June 19, dealt, quite naturally, with the battle-cruiser actions alone—the fierce and resolute character of the fighting, the tactics followed, the difficulties arising from the poor visibility. Beatty testified eloquently to the high standard of gunnery and torpedo efficiency in His Majesty's ships, the brilliant support rendered by Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas and the Fifth Battle Squadron, and by the destroyer flotillas and light cruiser squadrons; he praised the skill displayed by medical officers and engine-room departments. . . .

"The glorious traditions of the past were most worthily upheld." That was what England wanted to know. The British sailor, the man behind the gun, had shown the old spirit of the days of fire-ships and "cutting-out parties." The spirit of Drake and Nelson lived!

The official chart revealed the approximate tracks of the rival fleets, and was simple and easy of comprehension. It would be free from criticism, though it contained no hint of the German *Kehrtwendung* manœuvres or of the way in which the High Sea Fleet had actually got home—details still unknown to anyone in Britain.

In juxtaposition to Jellicoe's report, the Admiralty's official "appreciation" of the battle had been prepared by the eminent naval historian, the late Sir (then Mr.) Julian Corbett. It was released anonymously by the Admiralty Press Bureau for general Press use.

The "appreciation" set forth the broad aspects of the battle in terms the general reader could readily comprehend. The battle-cruiser fighting, Beatty's luring movement, the fleet engagement, the German retreat—all were explained lucidly and dramatically, with praise for the fine British leadership and regret that the fog had enabled the enemy to retire.

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The "appreciation" went further. It attempted to clear up some of the uncertainty caused by the first announcements. Nearly all Britain's great naval battles, said the writer, had been the subject of controversy, not even excepting Trafalgar. Readers were warned against uncompromising criticism and debate as to Jutland, until all the known facts could be released without giving desirable information to the enemy. . . .

The Press set about commenting on the new information.

As to the official reports by Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty, these could not be expected to tell the whole story without divulging naval secrets.

As to the Admiralty's "appreciation," who was the anonymous "competent authority" who had prepared it? Once more the Admiralty had refused to trust members of the Press to deal properly with the information at hand! This time, even the name of the favoured "authority" was withheld. And this "authority" openly anticipated a "debate," foresaw a "controversy!"

If there were to be debates and controversies, they could only be because the officials at the Admiralty had withheld items of vital information, shielded some individual in the belief that the public must not be discouraged and allowed to "get its tail down."

The newspapers would champion the British public. British citizens had always shown themselves capable of withstanding shocks, however unpalatable, without losing their heads. The nation would much prefer to be told the whole truth, even if the facts stung. British citizens were men.

The public pricked up its ears.

So the whole truth had not been told? There was still a mystery, a secret not yet divulged?

What was this thing being hidden behind the veil of military censorship? What was it the enemy must not know? Had Britain suffered catastrophic losses which could not be confessed? A squadron of battleships? More?

People read their newspapers.

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They read about the war in France, in Russia, in Italy, in far-off Smyrna. . . . And daily they read items which kept the great sea fight alive.

They were reminded that *Marlborough* had returned to harbour safely after being struck by an enemy torpedo—did not this imply that some of the enemy's vessels, likewise torpedoed, might have been kept afloat? The German ships reported sunk in Jellicoe's dispatch did not tally at all with those mentioned in Scheer's report. But the German statements had been quite accurate in their detailed lists of British losses. Was the Admiralty merely confessing the loss of those ships which Germany could prove, and keeping others secret?

Could the British Admiralty be trusted? It was common knowledge that the battleship *Audacious* had been sunk far back in 1914, yet Whitehall had never officially admitted her loss to this day.

Would not the official British statements concerning Jutland prove equally untrustworthy?

Gradually it became an obsession with many British people that Admiral Jellicoe had failed at Jutland, but was being protected by a benevolent Admiralty.

In those summer days of 1916 the hammer of innuendo in the hands of a powerful Press, drove in the wedge of misunderstanding between public and Admiralty, between public and navy—until it reached the fleet itself, and even among the fleet's officers there grew up a "Jellicoe school" and a "Beatty school," which coloured every discussion of the Battle of Jutland.

Who had been the proper leader? Beatty, who rushed headlong into the attack, regardless of his own strength? Or Jellicoe, who attacked and fought strategically for certain victory?

The Admiralty's passive attitude was interpreted as proof that there *had* been failure somewhere. Public confidence in the Commander-in-Chief weakened perceptibly, and there was a growth of blind faith in Beatty as Britain's naval "winner."

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The naval service felt very keenly the undeserved public reproach and the disapproval being levelled at the commander and the Battle Fleet. It was discouraging to meet it in letters from home, in the newspapers, in contacts when ashore on leave, where London cab-drivers and noble Lords offered sympathy and commiseration over the "loss" of the battle, accompanying their remarks with the knowing expressions of those possessing "inside" information. A few officers tried to offer explanations, justifications . . . there was hot argument at wardroom tables.

Much was said, much was written, which the two admirals concerned could only have answered by saying: "There can be but one school of thought, and that, the Royal Navy!"

But the Battle of Jutland, its truths and facts clouded by hundreds of false statements and the obscurity of censorship, passed into the consciousness of Britain's war generation as an episode which, if it must be publicly proclaimed as success and victory, must be secretly considered as loss and disgrace. As is so often the case, backstairs gossip had proved stronger than the truth.

The Great War was now in its third year; there was fighting to be done on land and sea. After two or three months the naval battle faded out of the newspapers, and the hammer of innuendo beat more sparingly upon the Jutland "mystery." Eyes looked forward——

But the seed of public suspicion, deeply planted, lay dormant until the conclusion of the war, when the hammer would emerge again, metamorphosed into a sledge of ridicule and abuse.

CHAPTER XL

THE BATTLE'S NAME

THROUGHOUT history, sea fights have received their names either from the names of the single ships concerned—as “The action between the *Constitution* and the *Guerriere*,” “The action between the *Sybil* and the *Forte*”—or, in the case of general engagements, from the name of the nearest well-known geographical landmark, strait, river or bay. “The Defeat of the Spanish Armada” is a notable exception.

“Salamis” took its name from an island; “Trafalgar” from a Spanish cape; “Tsu-Shima” from a strait.

Invariably, through the centuries, contestants on both sides have automatically adopted the same name, usually because its choice was obvious. During the World War, Britain and Germany alike spoke of “Coronel,” of “Falklands,” of “Dogger Bank” and “The Battle of Heligoland Bight.”

But the fleet action of May 31 to June 1, 1916, found no such agreement as to title. Unique in every other way, it became further distinguished as a naval battle identified by distinct and separate names in the two countries whose fleets fought it.

In Britain it became known as the Battle of Jutland. In Germany it was the Battle of Skagerrak—the “*Skagerrak-schlacht*”—and the latter name became as firmly rooted into German chronicles as is “Jutland” in the records of Great Britain.

Actually, the spot where Scheer and Jellicoe brought the main bodies of their fleets to action was equidistant from Norway, Jutland, and the Skagerrak.

When Scheer attacked, the fleets were roughly seventy miles from each of the three points.

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Close by the scene of the fleet action was that relatively shallow part of the North Sea known as the "Jutland Bank."

The fleet engagement took place at the most northerly part of the great battle area. No phase of the action approached nearer than this to Norway or to the Skagerrak. The preliminary and the subsequent fighting swept parallel to the Jutland coast, offshore, until at the end, during the last British torpedo attacks at dawn, the fleets were near the Horns Reef. One or two minor incidents connected with the German submarine traps were near the coast of Scotland.

During the actual fighting there were many instances in which ships were not aware of their exact navigational position; but later, for purposes of historical record, all the charts of the British ships were examined, the errors were eliminated, and the course and location of the battle were plotted with mathematical accuracy. In 1919, the British Admiralty, to confirm its figures beyond shadow of doubt and lend complete authenticity to the battle records which were being prepared, ordered a minesweeper to locate the hulk of the *Invincible*, sunk in fairly shallow water just after the main fleets joined action. The searching ship, putting down her sweep wires, found the wreck within fifteen minutes after beginning operations, and determined by astronomical observations that the hulk lay only a tenth of a mile—200 yards—from the position calculated by research of the fleet records.

The German Admiralty had likewise checked its records with extreme care, and the geographical positions shown on the official German charts of the battle coincide almost exactly with those on the British charts, the differences being too small to be of importance.

The first official German communiqué referred to "a series of engagements between the Skagerrak and Horns Reef." No official name was immediately given to the battle, and at first, in Germany, the public spoke only of "The Battle in the North

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Sea," or simply of "The Battle"—the details of the action were more important than its name.

The leading Berlin newspapers carried headlines and editorials in reference to "*Der Deutsche Seesieg in der Nordsee*" (German naval victory in the North Sea). The *North German Gazette* wrote of "The Great Naval Battle of the World War." On the same day various other German newspapers referred to the battle as *die Seeschlacht am Hornsriff*; *die Nordseeschlacht*; *die Seeschlacht vor dem Skagerrak*; and there was frequent mention of Jutland.

But almost immediately, in German official circles, the name "*die Skagerrakschlacht*"—the Skagerrak battle—became current to the exclusion of all others. This was because Britain was already beginning to make extensive use of the terms "Jutland" and "Horns Reef" and in Germany it was assumed that this was an attempt to focus attention upon the German retreat, and make it appear that the High Sea Fleet had not gone far abroad. Exactly the opposite impression was being hammered home upon the German people by the German Government. As a measure of propaganda, the word "Skagerrak" was chosen to emphasize the fact that the High Sea Fleet had boldly gone far north and there had met the enemy. The step was taken in resentment of the British "perfidy," which Germany believed was attempting to belittle and deny her fleet's venture.

When, a month later, Admiral Scheer rendered his official report, he too spoke of the "*Skagerrakschlacht*," and, victor in the eyes of his countrymen, put the seal of Imperial naval approval upon the term. *Skagerrak* it remained to all Germans.

The first official British communiqué located the naval engagement as taking place "off the coast of Jutland," no mention being made either of Horns Reef or of the Skagerrak. The second British bulletin made no reference to location at all.

In Great Britain as in Germany, the newspapers referred at first only to "The Naval Battle," or "The Battle." Public interest was so intense that further identification was unnecessary.

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Readers found Jutland to be another and little-known name for the Danish peninsula. They located the names mentioned in the German communiqué—the Skagerrak was the strait between Norway and Denmark; Horns Reef lay off the south Danish coast.

King George, in his congratulatory message to Admiral Jellicoe, referred to "The Battle." The "battle" was the important thing. . . .

On Monday, June 5, the conservative *Times* titled its leading editorial "The Battle of Jutland"—but the next day the same newspaper, in another leading editorial, wrote of "the great naval action in the North Sea," and said: "The Battle of Horns Reef seems on the whole the best name for it."

Parliament's first mention of the engagement centred about a motion to suppress the *Daily News* for describing, in its issue of Saturday, June 3, the "Horns Reef Battle" as "the greatest disaster to British arms." Amid laughter, the discussion was turned aside by the suggestion that, rather than the newspaper, it was the author of the original Admiralty bulletin who should be taken to task.

So far the Admiralty had given the battle no official name; neither had Mr. Churchill nor Mr. Balfour in their writings and speeches; neither had the King, nor any of the other personalities who set the stamp followed by "good form." To the Englishman it became, for the time being, "The Battle of Horns Reef."

This was obviously not its proper name. It remained for Admiral Jellicoe, in his official report, to give it the title which became generally used in all countries other than the Central Powers.

Jellicoe was concerned neither with the distance the Germans had ventured abroad, nor with emphasizing their retreat, and wished only to identify the battle by fixing accurately its climactic point—the same point stressed by the Germans. In naming the battle he referred neither to the coast of Norway, nor to the Skagerrak, nor to Horns Reef, nor to Jutland as a peninsula.

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The first paragraph of his report, made public on July 7, stated that the German fleet had been brought to action "to the westward of the Jutland Bank, off the coast of Denmark."

Henceforward Britain ceased to discuss "the best name" for the action. The Commander-in-Chief had christened it—the Admiralty put the seal of official approval upon the title. "The Battle of Jutland Bank" it became—"Jutland" for short—and retained that title among all English-speaking people and all those affiliated with Britain during the war, growing in importance through the years as it took its place beside the other decisive naval conflicts which have determined the outcome of Britain's wars at sea.

Skagerrak—Jutland—names equally harsh and strong, in keeping with the fury of the action for which they stand. Yet there is in them an inalienable separation in points of view as to the struggle's significance.

CHAPTER XLI

"SECOND JUTLAND"

WHILE the battle was still fresh in the world's mind, it had already begun to exert a profound effect upon the war.

Germany's High Sea Fleet was being rushed through the dockyards, to be brought back to battle readiness at the earliest possible moment. The personnel of the fleet expected, and desired, further action at once.

But Jutland had settled, once for all, the question of fleet superiority, and Scheer, having learned that he had nothing to hope from a general fleet engagement, was embarking upon a new phase of strategy in which the submarine assumed greater and greater importance as the fleet was relegated to the background.

For six months the admiral had been confronted with the problem of breaking the British blockade. He had tried every scheme which ingenuity and resourcefulness could devise. Six months of ceaseless effort had brought him no nearer to victory—and every week reduced by a little more the time allotted to him. "Successes" like that at Jutland merely consumed his strength without solving any of his problems.

Unless she won in the meantime, Germany must collapse for want of food and material at the end of a preordained period. No one knew how long she would be able to endure—perhaps three years, perhaps two, perhaps only one—many factors were involved, morale, the nature of the harvests, the amount of territory her troops could capture in the east. But unless the blockade were broken, famine—probably of food-stuffs,

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certainly of metals and military supplies—must inevitably come. Scheer's stroke for victory must be carried out successfully before that time, or there would be no victory, but only the bleakness of demoralization, despair and surrender.

Prudence demanded a conservative estimate of the length of time available. Jutland was not the only attack which had proved disappointing to Germany in 1916. The assault upon Verdun had collapsed and become, in General Ludendorff's opinion, an open wound which sapped Germany's strength at a time when she must conserve her forces. In the east, the Austro-Hungarian Fourth and Seventh Armies had met with catastrophic defeat in Galicia, and had lost prisoners on an unprecedented scale to the Russian Brussilov offensive. In the south, the Italians had broken through on the Isonzo and captured Gorizia and the Gorizia bridge-head. Since the end of June the Somme battle, first of Britain's great New Army offensives, had been raging on the Western Front, and for the first time tremendous and superior concentrations of enemy material—guns, munitions and aircraft—were being brought to bear against Germany in a new and frightful kind of warfare which would cost a million and a quarter casualties on both sides before this single offensive was ended. Apart from her losses in men, Germany was experiencing a sense of material inferiority, "almost of defencelessness, in the face of the profusion of enemy weapons."

Behind the enemy fleet were the lanes of the sea, over which slow, lumbering freight vessels brought the thousands of tons of supplies from the four corners of the earth, which gave Germany's enemies this material superiority. Ore and metals, guns and munitions, wheat and meat, cloth, rubber and leather.

Irony of ironies, it was the German Government which forbade the use of the submarines which had proved themselves the only vessels capable of penetrating the blockade and threatening the enemy's lines of sea communication.

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To release his submarines for the action he desired Scheer must play politics, enter the arena of domestic intrigue, match wits with courtiers, statesmen, and political adventurers; his chief antagonist was Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg. The Emperor's consent—the signature “Wilhelm II” to an order sanctioning unrestricted submarine-warfare—was the power with which Scheer might overturn the world.

And the admiral had become a force to reckon with. The prestige with which he emerged from Jutland had made him a national figure, and he was not slow to use his new influence. In his first report to the Emperor he had said: “A victorious termination of the war can only be obtained by the employment of submarines.”

A fortnight later he issued another confidential memorandum:

“. . . We have proved to the world that the British fleet is not invincible. . . . Yet if, in our present situation, we are not ultimately to bleed to death materially, we must make *unrestricted* use of the submarine to paralyse England's vital nerve.”

The result of Scheer's pressure was a conference with the Chancellor. On June 20, von Bethmann Hollweg came to Wilhelmshaven and attended a banquet at the Officers' Casino, at which all the important fleet officers were present and the naval situation was thoroughly discussed.

But von Bethmann Hollweg could not be induced to change his stand, and for the time being Scheer found himself unable to gain the desired *carte blanche* with the U-boats.

The middle of August found the High Sea Fleet ready for battle. Of the ships which had come in from Jutland, only *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* were still under repair. There were available, however, the dreadnought battleship *König Albert* (absent in the dockyard during Jutland), and the newly-completed battleship *Bayern*, eight 15-inch guns, mightiest vessel Germany had ever built.

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Scheer was not a man to remain idle while he could make any stroke for victory. His confidence in the fleet for "cutting out" operations was greater than ever, and he decided upon a new venture to harry Britain in the North Sea. The "Sunderland Plan," drawn up before Jutland and abandoned because of the impossibility of airship reconnaissance, stood ready to hand.

Before Jutland he had laid submarine traps employing seventeen submarines, and the number had been inadequate. This time he would use twenty-four, and would station them deep in the North Sea in areas through which the enemy must pass by daylight.

He would dispose eight Zeppelins as scouts—four to the north of the High Sea Fleet, four to the west—in such a manner that there would not be the remotest possibility of steaming into a British surprise.

The operation was scheduled for August 18-19. The bombardment of the town of Sunderland with two battle-cruisers and three battleships as the High Sea Fleet's vanguard, was the action calculated to bring Jellicoe and Beatty out into the submarine traps—if Beatty appeared as recklessly as he had at Jutland, the after-effects of that battle, both in England and Germany, would receive decisive confirmation. But this time Scheer had no intention of following the British battle-cruisers into the Grand Fleet's arms.

On the morning of August 18, the British Admiralty was electrified by the news which had been awaited for weeks. Since Jutland, Britain's strategy had been one gigantic trap which hoped to persuade and encourage Scheer to repeat his venture; the Royal Navy's sole wish had been a German navy confident enough to seek fleet battle.

On the 18th, at last, the Intelligence Service reported that the High Sea Fleet was assembling at Schillig Road in readiness for sea.

By noon the whole of Great Britain's sea force was preparing

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for action—every man, every ship from northern Scapa Flow to southern Dover. By early evening the whole of the Grand Fleet, short of its full fighting strength by only one battleship and five light cruisers, was at sea—thirty-five dreadnoughts to meet the nineteen which Scheer was bringing out. Jellicoe, who had been lying sick in the south of Scotland, had put after the fleet in the light cruiser *Royalist*, to take up the command temporarily entrusted to Admiral Burney.

The squadrons from Scapa Flow, Invergordon and Rosyth, screened by myriad destroyers, steamed unobserved through the dark hours, towards their appointed rendezvous one hundred miles to the eastward of the Firth of Forth. There, at daybreak, the armada would join company and turn southward—Beatty twenty miles in the van with the battle-cruisers, Jellicoe following with the main body of the Battle Fleet.

From the south, the Harwich Force of destroyers and light cruisers was coming up to join the fleet, scouting as it came. Five submarine scouts had been sent into the Heligoland Bight equipped, for the first time on the British side during the war, with long-range wireless. For the first time, ships of the Grand Fleet were towing kite-balloons, for reconnaissance and "spotting," a thousand feet aloft.

August 19th! Pray the enemy would be abroad! A long fair day in which to finish the work begun last May at Jutland Bank! If the German ventured to sea he would never reach home again! British hopes and expectations mounted high.

The High Sea Fleet left harbour at ten o'clock on the night of the 18th.

From Schillig Road the long line steamed out into the North Sea; the feeling below decks was the high-water mark of the fleet's spirit—a veteran readiness for whatever came. The destination was the sleeping, unsuspecting town of Sunderland—von Hipper in the lead with five heavy ships, accompanied by strong light forces; behind him Scheer with fourteen dread-

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noughts. The old pre-dreadnoughts had been left behind, proven unfit for work of this kind. Destroyers and light cruisers scouted ahead and on either flank; smoke swelled upward from the funnels and streaked across the starry sky. . . .

Far to the north and west the Zeppelins hovered as sentinels, their wireless ready to report enemy movements, their crackling motors thrusting them forward. The twenty-four submarines lay at their stations according to plan. . . . The North Sea was filled once more with the uncertainty of war, as German sea-power pressed westward and British sea-power moved down from the north.

Dawn—the 19th of August.

The orange rays of the rising sun were diffusing the film of night mist which hung close to the sea's surface.

At about half-past five the navigating officer of the light cruiser *Dublin*, scouting southward in advance of Beatty's Battle-Cruiser Fleet, sighted a small sail far ahead. In a few minutes the sail had disappeared—a fisherman, no doubt, temporarily hidden from view by a patch of mist. *Dublin*, a unit of Goodenough's Second Light Cruiser Squadron, was accompanied by her squadron-mate *Nottingham*. Both ships kept on.

Twenty-four minutes later *Nottingham* was shaken by two violent explosions. *Dublin*, sighting the tracks of enemy torpedoes, rushed to the support of her helpless companion; as she circled to keep down the submarine, she was herself attacked. At 6.25 a third torpedo struck *Nottingham*, and shortly after seven the crew was taken off by the destroyers *Penn* and *Oracle*, and the ship went down to join the great company of yesterday's ships at the bottom of the North Sea.

The "sail" which *Dublin* had sighted had actually been the German submarine *U-52*, under the command of Lieutenant Hans, who had resorted to the clever subterfuge to disguise himself while he lay on watch. He had succeeded not only in striking a mortal blow to a valuable British ship, but was in a

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position from which he could inform the German Commander-in-Chief of the enemy's movements. Scheer's improved disposition of his U-boats had already proved effective.

Jellicoe, receiving the news that *Nottingham* had been hit underwater, was uncertain whether she had met torpedo attack or run into a newly-laid mine-field, and at seven o'clock decided to turn the whole Grand Fleet to the northward, feeling it "prudent for the fleet to avoid this locality . . . until it was ascertained that the damage was due to torpedoes. . . ."

Stationed along the swept channels leading to and from the Heligoland Bight, five British submarines watched for signs of the expected enemy fleet. Playing the same stealthy rôle as that of the German U-boats three hundred miles north-west, they cruised at periscope depth, their torpedoes ready.

An hour before daylight, nothing had been seen.

Lieutenant-Commander Turner stood in the control-room of *E-23*, giving his orders in a quiet voice.

"Lower periscope! Raise periscope! Stop engines!"

The submarine, in perfect trim, glided silently in the direction of a black shape advancing through the night.

"Half speed! Stand by bow torpedo-tubes!"

Within minutes the clearly-defined silhouette of a German battle-cruiser was large in the periscope, distant 800 yards. Tense fingers gripped the firing-key as the crosswires came on.

"Fire! . . . Lower periscope!"

There was a wait for the concussion of an explosion . . . it did not come. . . . The torpedo had missed. A peep with the periscope showed the black battle-cruiser going on unharmed, surging westward, followed by the rest of her company.

Compelled to dive in the face of German destroyers, Turner remained out of sight for ten minutes, then brought *E-23* back to periscope depth. . . . A second group of ships was approaching—Scheer's main body, masked by light forces and cruisers. Diving under the screen, Turner fired a second torpedo—missed

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again. Ship after ship swept by, westward bound. *E-23*, not to be denied, continued her efforts.

Her third torpedo struck the dreadnought *Westfalen*, last ship in the enemy line. Hit amidships on the starboard side, *Westfalen* struggled to maintain her station, and Scheer, realizing that the speed of his entire fleet would be cut down by her injury, ordered her to turn back towards Wilhelmshaven accompanied by five destroyers. Turner had weakened the German force by six ships.

For two hours the British submarine followed the injured vessel, hoping to attack again and sink her, but in the broad daylight, was kept under by the destroyers until the mine-fields made further efforts impossible.

Left alone in an empty sea, *E-23* rose to the surface, put up her long-range wireless masts, and called the Fleet Flagship. Within minutes Jellicoe was being informed that she had encountered the westward-bound ships of the High Sea Fleet—"one battleship unable to go on."

Britain's gigantic scheme of intelligence was functioning perfectly. The directional wireless stations had by now rightly interpreted Sunderland as the German objective. At 9.30 Scheer's position was "fixed" one hundred and fifty miles off the British coast, and his course was being accurately plotted. The report from *E-23* placed the enemy some seventy miles further east, but it became obvious that the submarine's message had been incorrectly taken in.

Jellicoe, learning that *Nottingham's* injuries had been due to torpedoes and not to mines, had reshaped the Grand Fleet's course southward, while Commodore Tyrwhitt, with the destroyers and light cruisers from Harwich, was increasing his speed northward. The British forces, thoroughly informed of the German position, were closing upon the enemy from either hand, "favourably placed either to engage him before he reached the coast, or to cut him off from his bases afterwards."

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And this time Scheer, too, knew that the enemy was abroad. Not only had the chief German wireless observation and decoding station at Neumünster intercepted messages which established this fact, but since 6 a.m., reports from Zeppelins and submarines had been coming in to the German flagship.

Scheer was not yet certain, however, of the enemy's exact position. Germany was without the "direction-finder," and up to now the reports had been contradictory and confusing. Pending further news, the admiral had decided to hold his course—the High Sea Fleet steamed steadily westward into the British concentration. At 10.30 it was one hundred miles from Sunderland—at 11.30 eighty miles . . . at noon, less than seventy miles from the objective.

The weather continued clear and fine.

At 12.15 only thirty miles separated Beatty from von Hipper. Scheer and Jellicoe were less than sixty miles apart, converging at right angles, each making all speed, the British from the north, the Germans from the east.

To the British the meeting appeared certain. The Grand Fleet was at action stations, the ships cleared for battle. The orders for the distribution of gun-fire had already been signalled.

On the assumption that the Germans would turn and run for their bases as soon as battle was joined, Jellicoe had directed "a concentration of gun-fire of ships that would be ahead of *Iron Duke* on deployment, of two ships on one, leaving the *Iron Duke* to deal with one ship singly, as a compliment to her accurate firing at Jutland."

"Two ships on one!"—a trap from which Scheer would have little prospect of escape.

But the trap was not destined to spring. Destiny ruled that Scheer was to be saved by a mistake made high in the air, by the captain of one of his reconnoitring Zeppelins.

Between twelve and half-past, Scheer received two messages from the Zeppelin *L-13*, reporting an enemy force of thirty

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units, including battleships, cruisers and destroyers, moving up towards his rear from the south.

Scheer turned towards this force at once with all his strength, abandoning his former objective in favour of a valuable plum—precisely the type of British unit he had hoped to cut out. If the enemy held his course, Scheer would intercept him in two hours. At 12.15 the High Sea Fleet crowded on speed to the south-east—nearly a hundred German vessels moved towards thirty British. Sunderland now lay astern, spared for the second time from bombardment.

But the British ships actually sighted had included no dreadnoughts—they had been Commodore Tyrwhitt's Harwich Force, consisting of light cruisers and destroyers. And by the time Scheer had completed his turn and re-formed his fleet on the new course, Commodore Tyrwhitt, who had seen nothing of the enemy and did not want to advance too far northward for fear of missing him, had turned south and was now steaming away from the Germans!

Two-thirty. . . . "It was the hour when the encounter should have taken place. . . ."

Jellicoe, seeking Scheer, found the sea bare and the prey vanished. . . .

Scheer, seeking Tyrwhitt, saw only tumbling water to the horizon.

But meantime Scheer had received reports from two Zeppelins, and from the submarine *U-53*, indicating strong enemy forces sixty miles to the northward. Jellicoe! Swift calculations informed the German admiral that the latter would have met him had he continued his original course, and he realized that the British had been informed, not only of his movement, but of his position.

He would never again use wireless when moving at sea.

On both sides reconnaissance had developed to a point at which surprise was virtually impossible. The technique of defence had momentarily outstripped the technique of attack. Before there could be active fleet conflict again, new forms of

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strategy must be entered into—command of the air, immunity to underwater danger, immunity to signal penetration. Scheer could not be brought to battle. Equally, Scheer could not advance far enough into the North Sea to damage the English coast or reach the blockade line without destruction as the price.

Safe from the British main body, which was too far behind to overtake him, Scheer retreated on to the south-east, until at the end of an hour he came to the coastal mine-fields, when he turned east and set a course for Wilhelmshaven.

As Jellicoe got definite news from the Admiralty at 4 o'clock that Scheer was well on his way home, he ordered the Grand Fleet to turn back towards its bases. The disappointment among all ranks was acute.

There still remained one possibility of harassing the phantom enemy. The Harwich Force, under Tyrwhitt, grasping the situation, had made off at full speed to overtake the retreating Germans.

At 5 o'clock the hostile forces sighted each other, the British coming over the westerly horizon in a stern chase. Scheer, looking back through his binoculars, decided that there would be no advantage in sending light cruisers and destroyers to hold off his pursuers, since he believed the British had the superiority in speed, and felt, after his "lucky experience on the night of June 1" that he might accept the "risk of a night attack" upon his main body.

Tyrwhitt drove east into the twilight, in pursuit of Germany's black mystery of the sea . . . until, after dark, he was recalled by a wireless message from Jellicoe, which ordered him to return to his base, since the Grand Fleet was too far away to give him support in the event of action.

The "fight" was over.

Not a gun had spoken on either side during the fourteen hour "battle" of hide-and-seek. Scheer had suffered torpedo damage to one dreadnought; Jellicoe had paid the price to two light cruisers (*Falmouth* succumbing to torpedo damage from *U-66* while on her way home).

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The day had been a repetition of Jutland's decisiveness. Once more it had been Scheer's inferior battle-line that met damage, while Jellicoe's dreadnoughts remained immune. The experience lent final proof to Scheer's contention that Germany could not achieve a victorious termination of the war except by the employment of submarines against enemy commerce.

The phantom battle meant a return to inactivity for the High Sea Fleet. For Scheer to go to sea, avoiding action, was as damning to fleet morale as it was to remain inactive in port.

CHAPTER XLII

SUBMARINE WAR

THE situation was highly irritating to Admiral Scheer. To him the entire problem of naval warfare seemed so simple and direct—the employment of his weapons where they would damage the enemy.

It irked him to see his submarines lying in harbour—to know that they might be out in the Atlantic bringing down heavy game.

The Chief of the Naval Staff, venerable white-bearded Admiral von Holtzendorff, sympathized with Scheer, but found him “obstinate.”

Von Holtzendorff was carrying on the battle for the unrestricted submarine campaign at court and General Head-quarters—producing statistics, charts, diagrams, arguing that Britain would be unable to wage war for more than a few months if her commerce were ruthlessly attacked.

He found useful allies in Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and Chief Quartermaster-General Ludendorff—the victorious “team” recently brought from the east and given supreme command of the armies. The generals were highly interested in any proposal which promised to cut down, even moderately, the enemy’s supply of military material. A shipload of cannon sunk in the Atlantic was a shipload less to be blasted out of position on the Western Front.

All arguments for the unrestricted campaign were futile against the Chancellor’s counter argument that neutral Denmark, Holland and America would answer it by declaring war. Even the generals hesitated . . . the Verdun débâcle would have to be liquidated first, and they would have to wait the results of

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the "interesting campaign against Rumania," just begun, thanks to that country's temerity in declaring war on Austria.

But why was Scheer so pig-headed in his insistence that the submarine campaign be "unrestricted"?

Half a loaf was better than none. Von Holtzendorff felt that if the gods would not grant an unrestricted campaign, the thing to do was go on with "prize warfare"—and if the U-boat captains made a few mistakes, and were generous with their torpedoes, so much the better. When dealing with men like Bethmann Hollweg and the Emperor, one must take what one could get, and be glad of it.

When the Fleet Commander remained adamant in his refusal to send his submarines out for "prize warfare," von Holtzendorff had recourse to intrigue.

Although he was Chief of the Naval Staff, it was beyond his powers to give direct orders to the High Sea Fleet over the admiral's head. Only the Emperor could do that. Holtzendorff must secure the Emperor's signature.

Far to the north, beyond the Arctic Circle, enemy munition transports were carrying cargoes of war materials to Russia, over the line of communication established with tremendous difficulty by way of Archangel. The shipments were being rushed, so that as much as possible could be landed before ice closed the harbour.

At von Holtzendorff's instigation the Army High Command made official request to the navy that something be done to check these munition transports.

Armed with this request, Holtzendorff secured the Emperor's signature to an order requiring Admiral Scheer to send four submarines to operate against the Archangel-British lines of communication; this was early in September.

It was only the entering wedge. Scheer was receiving a fresh lesson in the evils inherent in the German system of naval command, with its divided authority and inherent inner conflicts.

The munition transports were successfully attacked. Holtzendorff used this success to secure Imperial orders detaching

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still more of Scheer's submarines from the High Sea Fleet for duty in commerce warfare under "prize rules." The boats were to cruise off the Canaries and in the Mediterranean; *U-53* was sent on an experimental cruise to the coasts of the United States.

Scheer saw that further objections were fruitless. After several conferences between the Naval Staff, the Fleet Staff, and the Flanders U-boat Command, the admiral agreed to a resumption of general "prize warfare" with all the submarines available.

The date set for the opening of the campaign was October 7. Of the eighty boats ready, a number were of the long-range, deep-sea type, with an operating radius of six to eight thousand miles and a cruising endurance up to one hundred days; others were fitted for laying mines; all were proved and powerful vessels. Ten new submarines were being commissioned monthly.

Despite the restrictions of "prize rules," the attack fell upon the Allies with instant effect.

In October and November, 1916, 670,000 tons of shipping went to the bottom, half of it British.

For a year and a half the Royal Navy had faced the problem of protecting commerce from U-boat activities, yet no effective defence had been arrived at. New weapons always cause military confusion. If Germany could not agree upon the proper use of submarines, her enemies were equally uncertain as to the proper methods of submarine defence.

There was one British naval officer, however, with extensive, first-hand experience in dealing with the German U-boat. Thus far his activities had been limited to the Grand Fleet, but the problem of protecting dreadnoughts from submarine attack was not dissimilar, in its fundamentals, from that of protecting merchant vessels.

Admiral Jellicoe's success in rendering the Grand Fleet immune to this menace had been as striking as had the ineffective-

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ness of the officers who were struggling with the problem of protecting commerce. The Grand Fleet had not lost an important ship to the submarine since the Commander-in-Chief's defence measures went into effect in 1914. This performance was astonishing in view of the damage which the U-boats had achieved, almost at will, against all other targets during that time.

In November, Mr. Balfour, First Lord of the Admiralty, summoned Admiral Jellicoe to London to discuss the submarine problem.

The situation was growing more and more serious. It was becoming increasingly evident that the U-boat now represented the greatest of the enemy's naval threats. It was known that powerful influences were at work in Germany urging a return to "unrestricted" warfare. Should this actually take place, the consequences might be sufficient to carry the Allies down.

The First Lord was deeply impressed by Jellicoe's grasp of the submarine problem, both from the strategical side and as a matter of experience. The admiral spoke as a man who had studied the subject, lived with it, thought about it, gone into it from every aspect—and made up his mind that it could be beaten. Who knew, moreover, what he would do to beat it.

The result of the conference was Mr. Balfour's decision that he had found the only man to whom personal command of the entire anti-submarine campaign could be entrusted with confidence. The First Lord made this proposal to his colleagues at the Admiralty.

But could Jellicoe be spared from the fleet?

Could Great Britain, whose line of battleships had been her shield for so many centuries, consider any other place for her most experienced commanding admiral and greatest strategist and tactician than aboard the Fleet Flagship?

Jellicoe had stated his personal belief that the German High Sea Fleet would not risk action again for some time—not, at

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any rate, until the submarine had been thoroughly tried and had failed. The Commander-in-Chief was usually extraordinarily—almost uncannily—accurate in his predictions. Yet the enemy fleet remained a great menace—the very news of a change in the British command might alter the German strategy.

Twenty-four hours went past.

Fresh news of submarine sinkings.

Almost hourly it was becoming clear that the submarine was the primary threat to Britain's existence. For the second time, Britain's foremost naval leader must bring his genius to bear upon a problem which meant victory or defeat for his country. He must leave the fleet—another man would have to carry forward the fleet strategy which he had developed and which had known such distinguished success.

On November 24, Mr. Balfour telegraphed Jellicoe the decision of the Board of Admiralty, asking the admiral if he were willing to consider the post of First Sea Lord, supreme military leadership of the naval war effort?

Jellicoe answered by telegram: "I am ready to do whatever is considered best for the Service."

A meeting was arranged between the two men for November 27, at Rosyth.

On the evening of November 26, 1916, the Grand Fleet was completing a "sweep" into the North Sea—its last under the flag of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe. The ships had turned northward towards Scapa Flow. No trace of the enemy had been seen. The huge martial armada, spread across the twilight waters in all majesty, was alone in this sea.

Standing in the raw autumn air on the bridge of the *Iron Duke*, Jellicoe watched the ships for the last time as they swept on. . . . Great grey dreadnoughts, tall cruisers, lurching wet destroyers—his Command—the sight which had always filled his eyes with pride and the honour of responsibility. . . . Ships which he had known in battle, in fog and storm, on summer seas, in bleak hardship at Scapa . . . in which he had lived 1914's anxieties and 1916's triumphs—

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Thousands of his friends sailed in them—men of all ranks, who had given him their loyalty, trusted him as their commander, followed him through the fires of death to victory. . . . There were the spirits of missing men and ships among them—Hood, Arbuthnot, *Black Prince*, *Invincible*. . . .

Ships, faces, friends, swept on before eyes dimmed by a heavy heart. *Iron Duke*, the flagship, was falling out of the formation, turning away towards Rosyth.

“Good luck!” flashed from the Flagship’s wireless, and was answered a hundredfold from vessels, great and small, which had looked to *Iron Duke* and her admiral for guidance through two crucial years.

The Flagship passed out of sight into the dusk—the captain was going to a new and greater battle—“a position which I knew was the most difficult that a sailor could be called upon to fill in war time.”

Days and nights of detailed, anxious work, lay ahead . . . weeks of care and weariness, of endless struggle and the demand for courage, facing a determined enemy, often facing muddle, dissension and misunderstanding at home. . . . None of it mattered, compared with the needs of the country. For the second time in Jellicoe’s career came responsibility and burden such as few men had borne. He faced the issue with confidence tempered by bitter experience. Once before he had gambled, taking over command of the Grand Fleet at the eleventh hour. . . . He would gamble again. But would the fates be kind a second time, and grant him again the weeks and months necessary to meet the situation?

Mr. Balfour and Admiral Jellicoe met at Rosyth the next morning, and Jellicoe accepted the appointment of First Sea Lord.

With her instinct for survival, Britain had sensed the coming storm, and had placed the proper man in the proper spot to consider it.

The question of the Fleet Command had already been con-

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sidered. The Admiralty had decided upon Vice-Admiral Sir David Beatty, both because of his intimate knowledge of the fleet and of his enormous public following. There was no question that, with Beatty in command, the nation would grant the fleet unhesitating confidence, particularly in view of the newspaper attitude.

On November 28 Jellicoe addressed his farewell message to the admirals, captains, officers and men of the fleet—a simple, touching expression of thanks for their loyal support, a tribute to their efforts in attaining and keeping the fleet's high state of efficiency, "even if the opportunities for testing the result were so seldom provided by our enemy." The message closed with the words: "May your arduous work be crowned with a glorious victory resulting in a just and lasting peace!"

The admiral's flag fluttered down from the fore-truck of the flagship *Iron Duke*. For twenty-eight months it had flown aloft, a standard of high and trusted command, revered and loved by those who followed and fought under it; feared by those who fought against it. When it was hoisted it had found the fleet weak, half-organized for war; as it came down it left a fleet which might stand as a pattern of efficiency and military power for all British fleets to come.

—The captain had departed.

On December 5 Jellicoe assumed his new duties in London, to administer the total naval force, organize and wield the emergency anti-submarine navy of more than four thousand vessels, to develop the strategy that would stop the submarine, to become the supervisor of the greater part of the shipping on the seven seas. Not until after the war would the public learn the details of the crisis through which he fought to success. Not for years would people realize that a man at a desk in Whitehall had faced the war's supreme test almost single-handed, with the same resolute strategical leadership that had marked his career afloat, and had achieved a double victory unique in the annals of maritime warfare.

The public, misinterpreting and misunderstanding events,

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saw only a Jellicoe who had "failed at Jutland," and now at last had been "set aside" and "deprived of his command." At last the secret was out—the Admiralty had rewarded Beatty, the "victorious," with the Fleet Command, while Jellicoe had received the long-anticipated "censure" and been sent ashore to a non-combatant position.

CHAPTER XLIII

CRISIS

FIVE days before Jellicoe's conference with Mr. Balfour, Admiral Scheer had been summoned to German General Staff Head-quarters at Pless, for an audience with the Emperor. The question under discussion was the proposal to extend the present "prize rules" submarine warfare to a campaign in which every ship encountered should be sunk, regardless of nationality, type or purpose.

Asked to express his views, the admiral said—without hesitation—that the present campaign was a "show of strength," nothing more. It was valuable, but could not be decisive. As long as neutral ships and passenger vessels were spared, and the submarines came to the surface to stop and search their targets, it was impossible to exert really compelling pressure upon the enemy. The submarine was a weapon to be employed to the hilt—restrictions of any nature invited Germany's defeat. Let the neutrals declare war if they liked—Scheer could promise that before any of them developed sufficient military strength to affect the situation, Britain would have collapsed—the submarine would starve her to defeat within short months, and the entire allied structure would be carried down with her.

Meantime the High Sea Fleet was to assume defensive inactivity, supporting the submarine operations.

On the last three movements to sea, Scheer's ships had suffered torpedo damage—on August 19 *Westfalen* had been struck; during a movement on October 10 the light cruisers *München* and *Stettin* had been damaged; and again on November 4 the dreadnoughts *Kronprinz* and *Grosser Kurfürst* had met torpedoes from British submarines. The Emperor had been angered

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by this repeated injury to important units, particularly the November 4 affair, which had seemed a reckless exposure of Germany's best ships—they had been sent out to stand by a stranded German U-boat.

Scheer, anxious to secure consent to the unrestricted submarine campaign, gave assurance that in future the dreadnoughts would be most cautiously operated. He had no intention of entering the open sea, but would remain within the mine-fields.

No matter. German thoughts were leaping optimistically ahead to to-morrow's victory under Hindenburg and Ludendorff. Scheer now had his first meeting with the Field-Marshal and the Chief Quartermaster-General, to discuss the unification of army and navy strategy, which was an important part of the Hindenburg-Ludendorff plans.

The three men formed an instant bond of mutual appreciation. All belonged to the German military school whose conception of victory was boundless, and which saw nothing extraordinary in the thought of a Germany, with her 60,000,000 people, as a conquering and dominant nation before which the British Empire, the Russian Empire, the French Empire, and all their Allies, must fall. So sure was this school of its fortune that, during that same month in 1916, the Naval Planning Section in Berlin was drawing up new and detailed plans for the administration of the tremendous African Colonial Empire with which Germany expected to emerge from the war, including the Belgian Congo, French Equatorial Africa, and portions of Rhodesia and the Portuguese territories, to make Germany independent of the rest of the world in tropical raw stuffs.

The road to victory was planned in massive, co-ordinated strokes. There was to be an end to bloody, fruitless adventure on the Western Front. The armies in France and Belgium would be drawn back to a carefully prepared, impregnable defensive entrenchment, the "Siegfried" (or "Hindenburg") line. The eastern armies would operate aggressively to complete the crushing of Rumania and the downfall of Russia. Scheer

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would keep the High Sea Fleet intact to defend the flanks and the coast. There must be an unrestricted submarine campaign, to be pressed as the stroke which would paralyse the western enemies.

The war, which had looked so dark last August, would be over by midsummer of 1917, and would end in German triumph.

At this cross-roads, in which the military desired and planned to go on to a new war, a second war, the war of 1917-18, von Bethmann Hollweg, by herculean efforts, secured the Emperor's consent to offer Peace.

On one point the statesmen and the military were agreed. The first war, the war of 1914-1916, had come to an end in deadlock. Things could not go on as they were.

Peace?

Here the statesmen and the military were opposed.

Unfortunately for Germany the division made success impossible for either party. Von Bethmann Hollweg had postponed the submarine campaign. Now the General Staff shaped the wording of the Bethmann Hollweg peace note so that the document was more like a manifesto of defiance than a proffer of the olive branch.

The Emperor, who had not yet taken a decided stand one way or the other, consented to the peace efforts—he consented equally to the preparations for 1917's military strategy.

By the end of November the note had been submitted to the Governments of Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey for approval. It was published to the world on December 12, 1916. It proposed international negotiations for peace—without suggesting what form the negotiations should take. There was no mention of terms that would be acceptable to the Central Powers, no mention of German demands, or promise of German concessions. But the tender closed with the words:

“If, in spite of this invitation to peace and reconciliation, the struggle should go on, the four Allied Central Powers are

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determined to wage it to the victorious end, while solemnly declining all responsibility before humanity and history."

Only a week ago Bucharest, the capital of Rumania, had fallen, and with the conquest of the Rumanian kingdom, Germany and her allies had gained priceless supplies, chief among them wheat and oil.

Britain, too, had come to cross-roads. The Asquith Government had resigned on December 5. Mr. Lloyd George, the "knock-out man," had formed his coalition "War Cabinet," which promised victory to the nation.

The new Government met just three days before the publication of the German peace proposal. The Bethmann Hollweg note arrived at an hour when the political destinies of the Lloyd George Cabinet required a Germany humbled and on her knees, not one admitted to the equality of the conference table in rational peace negotiations. To extend a friendly hand in answer to the note would have been a reversal of front so great as to mean political suicide for the members of the British Government.

As a matter of fact, the peace note filled the British public with suspicion and distrust, and the politicians merely reflected the sentiments of the nation. The German proposals were too vague; the tone of the note was too arrogant; the hand of the military was too plainly evident. The offer appeared a mixture of military subterfuge and demand for Allied capitulation.

France expressed similar views, maintaining that Germany was only seeking to gain time. In Russia, the Tsar, unconscious of the storm about to descend upon his head, made known his intention "to fight on." Japan, Rumania, Italy, Serbia, Portugal, would follow the leading Allies.

On December 18, President Wilson, just re-elected, offered his services as mediator, addressing a communication to all the warring Powers, asking each nation to state publicly the terms of peace which would be acceptable, "the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind . . . being virtually the same."

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Swift, fleeting December days of political ferment, national passions, diplomatic strain . . . futile end of 1916 . . . blind entry into 1917.

Before the various Governments had made known their final answers to the German peace proposal, Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg received notification from General Staff Head-quarters that the time had come to draw up preliminary diplomatic notes announcing the unrestricted submarine campaign, "so that activities may set in with certainty at the end of January."

The date was December the 23rd. The military attitude exemplified all the contempt which the German High Command felt for the Imperial Chancellor's pacifist statesmanship.

Three days later the Chancellor's aspirations were finally crushed, when the enemy Allies sent formal notification that the German offer to negotiate for peace was rejected.

The year 1916 came to an end in a bitter week of frustration. The war must go on. Twenty-two months more——

On January 9 the meeting which finally decided the unrestricted submarine campaign was held at Pless, in the presence of the Emperor. Von Hindenburg, Ludendorff, and Admiral von Holtzendorff were present to urge the campaign, and von Holtzendorff had finally managed to win over one of von Bethmann Hollweg's most consistent supporters, Admiral von Müller, the Chief of the Cabinet.

The meeting lasted only thirty minutes. The Chancellor's objections were finally overridden. Germany would defy the world. The decisive argument was von Holtzendorff's promise: "Without hesitation I can make the statement that under present conditions, by use of the unrestricted submarine campaign, we can force England to sue for peace within five months."

The Emperor consented to the campaign to begin on February the 1st.

CHAPTER XLIV

APRIL—AUGUST, 1917

THE war of 1914 had been comprehensible. . . . Now the world was caught up in events beyond comprehension, in movements continental in their immensity. The storm was so fierce that its blast searched out every crevice habited by man—hardly a living thing on the surface of the globe—plant, animal or human—was free from the effects. . . . It beat upon the past with eroding violence, nurtured mushroom growths which sprang up to fall again, upset all laws and confirmed all laws . . . heroism, cowardice, folly, wisdom, were jumbled together in a madness of contradiction . . . and no one could understand what was taking place.

By March there was revolution in Russia—the details and facts were lost behind broken communications, civil war, censorship and conflicting propaganda.

For nearly two months the submarine campaign had gone on. Diplomatic relations between the United States and Germany had been broken off. America—a hundred million people spread over a vast, remote domain—was gathering momentum towards a declaration of war.

How could Scheer, how could the German generals, comprehend the social and political forces which were being let loose—the devastating forces which would change the very face of civilization? The violence which would answer violence?

Germany had supported the Russian Revolution for military purposes, believing she would be able to dominate a democratic Russia, either through intrigue or through the inherent weakness and inexperience of the Russian revolutionary leaders.

Germany had chosen to make an open enemy of America, believing that the great democracy on the other side of the

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Atlantic—openly pacifist, its President a professor, its standing army small and poorly equipped, its navy unbalanced—would prove a half-hearted, weak antagonist.

Germany felt contempt for all democracies, for the parliamentary system, for all countries in which "opposition" to the Government was tolerated. What did "the people" know about government? Would one permit an army to decide the strategy of its generals? Such countries would never dominate the world.

But the answer to Germany's destiny was being written in the Berlin slums, that "Hunger Winter" of 1916-17 . . . even as the eyes of the German Command were fixed upon the destruction of others.

For the first time since the beginning of the war, there was a growing sentiment among the German masses that the price of this experience would prove greater than its rewards.

The High Command, blind to the evidence behind the German front, dealt in military statistics.

In the first sixty days of unrestricted submarine activity eleven hundred thousand tons of enemy shipping was sunk. This was over a quarter of the way towards the German Admiralty's goal of four million tons—the point at which the calculations had proved Britain must collapse.

Life at sea had become a nightmare to mariners—German or British, American or French, Austrian or Italian, merchant or naval.

N. J. Fjord's 653 net registered tons were only a tiny fraction of the 900,000 tons of world shipping destroyed by German submarines during the month of April. The small Danish steamer which had accidentally caused, and lived to run away from, the Battle of Jutland, was one of the host of vessels which were April's toll.

February, March, April—three months, and in them a total of two million tons had been sent to the bottom—destruction at a rate fulfilling every promise made by the German Admiralty.

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And the cost to Germany?

Nine submarines.

UC-68, destroyer of the *N. J. Fjord*, had been torpedoed a few hours afterwards by the British *C-7*, and had been one of only nine U-boats which the total Allied naval forces, hundreds upon hundreds of patrol craft, destroyers, motor-boats, seaplanes, submarines, decoy ships, mine-layers, had been able to sink in the ninety days since the beginning of the "unrestricted" campaign. During that time thirteen new German submarines had been commissioned; one had been interned—the net gain to Germany was three boats.

Two million tons—and an enemy stronger than when the campaign had begun. These were the facts of the crisis. Britain's food reserves were vanishing; the Allied armies were feeling a growing munition shortage.

America's declaration of war seemed an empty gesture.

Jellicoe, sitting behind his Admiralty desk in London, watched the situation unfold from hour to hour. Huge charts in the staff rooms were the chess-boards of war, with a myriad of tiny coloured pins telling the location of the pieces, the spots at which enemy submarines had been identified by the wireless direction-finders, the movements of Allied patrol forces, the movements of merchant vessels. . . . At intervals a clerk entered, shifted pins here and there, indicated the location of a fresh sinking.

Jellicoe had approached his task with proposals so revolutionary that their adoption meant altering the world's seafaring practices.

To allow ships like the *N. J. Fjord* to depart upon solitary voyages was as fatal a procedure as to send Grand Fleet dreadnoughts to sea without destroyer escorts. More so. The defenceless *N. J. Fjord* had not even been torpedoed—the enemy had coolly gone aboard her and placed demolition bombs, sunk her for the expense of a gun-shot and two or three pounds' worth of explosive. She had been one of dozens treated in the same manner. The patrol boats had been in other parts of the

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sea. The presence of the humblest sort of armed escort vessel would have saved the ship. The presence of escort vessels would save a large percentage of the merchantmen being sunk daily.

But it was out of the question to give every merchant ship an individual escort, in the manner in which Jellicoe had protected his dreadnoughts. The ratio of merchantmen to men-of-war made this quite impossible. To protect merchantmen, the only feasible method was to group them in convoys of five, ten, thirty, forty vessels under armed escort—and even then, the problem of finding escorts would be tremendous.

Yet it was the only way in which the anti-submarine craft could be disposed where the enemy wanted them least.

Many objections had greeted Jellicoe's proposals. It was said that merchant ships would never be able to keep station in convoy—certainly not when running without lights at night. That there would be collisions and confusion which would only aid the submarines. That all shipping would be disrupted and delayed—harbour facilities would collapse under the burden of simultaneous arrivals and departures. . . . Neutral Governments would refuse to co-operate; ship captains would oppose naval supervision, and there would be insurmountable difficulties of polyglot tongues.

Chief objection of all was the protest that the convoys would lump the submarine targets into huge, easily sighted groups, whose smoke alone would make them visible for miles, so that the U-boats would do greater damage than ever.

Yes, there were many obstacles—they must be overcome. The strategist was dealing in certainties, in the disposition of men-of-war where they would be able to destroy the enemy, or, equally desirable, render him ineffective. Schedules and rules must be drawn up, printed in the various languages; mercantile marine masters must be educated; harbour facilities must be revolutionized to deal with the demands which would be made on them; neutral and Allied Governments must be induced to co-operate; escort ships must be found.

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Simultaneously the tactical counter-attack against the submarine must be developed and pressed home—depth-charges, listening devices, improved mines, non-ricochet shells.

In May the first convoy sailed—to arrive at its destination without the loss of a single vessel. It was a triumph—a grain of comfort in a situation which up to now had contained little but dark news.

But time was short. There remained the herculean task of adjusting all Britain's shipping to the new procedure—and meantime the war was being lost.

Jellicoe was dealing personally with over 1,500 telegrams and communications a day, working long night hours, throwing his entire strength into the task, fighting as heroically as though he stood on the gun-deck of a ship in action.

The administration of his office was often made doubly difficult by internal problems. There was not always complete harmony within the Admiralty. It was a time of strain, overwork and raw nerves. Sir Eric Geddes, who had replaced Mr. Balfour as First Lord when the Lloyd George Coalition Cabinet assumed office, was a man of strong personality, conscious of his authority and position, with an almost dictatorial attitude towards the professional naval people among his Admiralty colleagues.

At times Jellicoe, as military head of the organization, was called upon to exert all his tact and persuasive power to bridge over awkward situations and inner conflicts. Yet the state of the war was crucial, and personal difficulties were entirely secondary.

The Grand Fleet had grown stronger. The dreadnoughts of the *Royal Sovereign* class had taken their place in the battle-line; the battle-cruiser squadrons had been joined by the gigantic *Repulse* and *Renown*, and the three heavy cruisers *Courageous*, *Furious* and *Glorious*. . . . The appearance of the ships had changed—armour had been stiffened; kite-balloons were in use all through the fleet; aeroplanes perched on platforms on the forward high turrets; "directors" had been installed in the secondary batteries,

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and there was new apparatus for gunnery concentration. Paravanes had been introduced—ingenious devices towed from the ships' bows for fending off and cutting the cables of anchored mines. Here was a revolution! There would no longer be any hesitation to pursue a retreating enemy through mined waters!

Beatty had chosen the dreadnought *Queen Elizabeth* as his Flagship. Again and again the entire armada steamed into the North Sea. The organization acted with the smoothness built through long and active years—consumed coal, carried out practice "shoots," passed in and out of harbour, went to dockyard for routine overhaul, returned to duty . . . it was a veteran fleet, unshakable in discipline, confident in strength.

But while the Grand Fleet had grown stronger, decay had struck at the heart of the High Sea Fleet, inactive on the other side of the North Sea.

Scheer had transferred his flag to the *Baden*, newest ship in the fleet. *Friedrich der Grosse*, his former Flagship, had become a centre of lower-deck unrest. The men were discontented with their part in the war, resentful of a hundred oppressions, real or fancied. The bond of understanding and sympathy between them and the officers had been clipped by the departure of many experienced lieutenants and lieutenant-commanders to submarine, aviation or destroyer duty, and the arrival of reservists who were unfamiliar with the ships and with the sea. The best petty officers and men had gone to active units—the fleet had been thrust into an "inactive" category. Service in the battle-line was no longer the pride and ambition of the German naval man.

There were two ration allotments for enlisted men of the German navy—one for those doing "active" duty, one for those on harbour, or secure duty ashore. The latter ration had been very bad during the "Hunger Winter" just passed, barely adequate to sustain health—turnips and herb tea, potato bread, very little meat . . . The veterans of Jutland, the men who had spent months longing for battle, felt the disgrace of being classed

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with tug-boat men and dockyard guards. It was as though battalions of "shock troops" had been put into the humble status of labour brigades. Such factors are bad for morale—they affected the fleet more than did the actual quality of the food.

The officers' messes had not been similarly reduced.

The belief spread among the crews that there was food in plenty for the navy, but that the commissariat department was profiteering by selling naval supplies ashore, where the demand was very great.

The entry of America into the war had had a profound and discouraging effect upon the German masses, and the revolution in Russia had sounded the tocsin of organized protest. With the secret support of Allied money and printed matter, the Radical wing of the German Social-Democratic party was working towards a German revolution.

The first trouble in the fleet came in the form of "hunger strikes" in June. These brought a slight improvement in the ration allowance, but not enough to silence the discontent. More or less by accident, the sailors made contact with the leaders of the revolutionary Socialists in Berlin. The result was the formation of a secret "Sailors' Union" in the High Sea Fleet, led by a form of soviet—a sailors' council—in each ship, with fleet head-quarters in the *Friedrich der Grosse* under the chairmanship of a stoker petty officer.

During the months of June and July, 1917, the union grew rapidly, until it numbered several thousand members. Peace was the promise made to the men—the union proposed to help end the war by holding itself ready to join an international General Strike of all soldiers, sailors and munition workers on both sides of the conflict. As secondary objects, better food, easier duty and discipline were to be secured; and there were strong revolutionary forces at work, envisioning the overthrow of the monarchy in favour of a Socialist Germany as part of the world revolution.

For weeks the officers remained unaware of the union's existence, and the organization attained greater and greater

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momentum. But an inner rivalry grew up among the sailors themselves—a contest for leadership between the “Fleet Central” in the *Friedrich der Grosse* and the “Ship Central” in the battleship *Prinzregent Luitpold*.

On August 1 the latter ship cast off the restrictions of the fleet leadership, and flared up into an open mutiny over a trivial issue—the refusal of a cinema entertainment promised to one of the stoker watches.

For three days the fleet was in a tumult. In half the ships there were demonstrations of sympathy for the mutineers. The Fleet Command learned of the union’s existence—and Scheer struck back with heavy effect. Dozens of arrests were made, all the ringleaders were flung into prison, *Friedrich der Grosse* and *Prinzregent Luitpold* were detached from the fleet and sent to lie in isolation in Schillig Road.

On September 5 two of the sailor ringleaders were executed by a firing squad at Cologne. Three other principals were spared in the hope that they would turn State’s evidence against the leaders of the revolutionary movement in Berlin; in these cases the sentence of death was commuted to fifteen years’ penal servitude. Other men were given shorter terms and were ordered to the Naval Brigade in Flanders for trench duty upon their release.

For the time being the “Sailors’ Union” vanished and the mutinies were over. The fleet ration was very much improved and steps were taken to restore the morale of the crews. But the damage had been done—something had been lost to the Imperial Navy and the “Skagerrak” High Sea Fleet which would never return.

Scheer wrote afterwards: “The best distraction would have been active warfare.” But that was the one distraction which it was now quite impossible for the German Naval Command to offer the High Sea Fleet in the North Sea.

CHAPTER XLV

WHITEHALL

AT the end of September, the unrestricted submarine attack upon commerce had sunk the stupendous total of four million, seven hundred thousand tons of shipping—nearly a million tons beyond the figure which Germany had expected would bring Great Britain to her knees.

Yet Jellicoe was able to tell Mr. Lloyd George at that time that the submarine campaign was defeated. He made the statement because he knew it was so—during September the tonnage lost to the submarines had been kept within the limits which meant life to the Allies, while ten enemy U-boats had been destroyed, the greatest number in any one month thus far. The convoy system was proving the measure which decided the issue. Of the hundreds of vessels which had crossed the Atlantic in convoy from American ports since May, there had been a loss of less than one vessel in a hundred. The crisis had been met. By the narrowest of margins Britain had survived. Now the pendulum was swinging in favour of the Allies.

October, November and December confirmed the judgment. The submarine was still a problem. It still destroyed ships. But it would not win the war.

In spite of his success, Jellicoe laboured under conditions of increasing difficulty at the Admiralty.

On the evening of December 24, 1917, he looked up from the mass of papers on his desk.

He was very tired. For fourteen hours he had worked without pause. Without thought of the holiday season. In a short time every church bell in London would be pealing out its welcome to a new Christmas Day, the fourth of the war—

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repeating the ancient hope: "Peace on earth, good will towards men!" Yet, to the admiral, December 24 had been another day of war, of life and death struggle reflected within these four important walls.

His eyes travelled about the office. . . . There was a chart lying upon the table, and at the sight of it his thoughts leaped to the sea, to the ships that were abroad to-night and the men on their bridges, their fates hanging upon Whitehall. . . . For a moment the shapes of ships crossed his vision—he could see their dark plodding forms, hear the wash and smell the salt night air of the broad oceans.

Then the spell was broken, and he was back again in the electric-lighted office.

How well he knew it—the four walls, furniture, the windows and doors.

For twelve months he had been at a desk. Often his rest had been the briefest, his sleep the shortest.

Confining—the life—after that aboard ship.

But he was glad he had made the decision to come. Gratified that his work here had been successful.

The duty had been, at times, heart-breaking. Indecision, "muddling through," official stupidity—all these had had to be met, and often they had loomed as mountains to be overcome.

Yet there would be victory! Germany had not reckoned upon a 1918! America was making herself felt. . . . There were American destroyer flotillas operating from Queenstown in the anti-submarine work, American cruisers and pre-dreadnoughts in the convoy service. Four American battleships had arrived in Scapa Flow to reinforce the Grand Fleet—within a week they had gone out as the Sixth Battle Squadron and manœuvred with the fleet, obeying Beatty as though they flew the colours of the Royal Navy. . . . Good ships, good men.

Admiral Sims, commanding the American naval forces in European waters, had told Jellicoe only to-day that more than fourteen hundred vessels were under construction in American shipyards—destroyers by the dozen, submarine-chasers by the

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hundred. Remarkable people, the Yanks. Crusaders. "Make the world safe for Democracy!" Make the world dangerous for the Germans—that would be enough. But it all amounted to the same thing. American troops were beginning to appear in Europe, and there were hundreds of thousands of men in American cantonments who would be in France by midsummer and in the trenches soon afterwards.

There would be victory!

But there was trouble on the Russian side—collapse there.

The admiral thought back upon the days when he had commanded the Grand Fleet. That had seemed a job that took all a man's energies—but it had been elementary compared with the First Sea Lord's desk with the German submarine service to beat.

Jutland—how many months had passed since Jutland, day of vivid, unforgettable memories.

How clearly the issue of the war had depended—and did depend—upon control of the seas. What an extraordinary honour that responsibility for that control had been so long vested in him—his efforts had been Britain's shield since the beginning of the war.

. . . One by one, each German ship had been driven from the seas. First the merchantmen, then the overseas cruisers, then the High Sea Fleet . . . now the submarines.

When there was no quarter to the Imperial Navy, above or below the seas, then—and only then—the war would end.

Would there be peace before the coming of another Christmas?

The strokes of Big Ben's chimes floated through the still wintry night . . . eight . . . nine o'clock. The Admiralty building was hushed . . . a typewriter clicked in the anteroom outside the First Sea Lord's office, preparing orders and dispatches for signature. When he had signed them Jellicoe would leave—He must be at his desk again in the morning.

The typewriter stopped. He could hear the clerk push back his chair, cross the room, knock.

"A note has just come for you, sir."

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Jellicoe opened the envelope. Four or five lines lay upon the sheet of paper within, over the name "Eric Geddes."

For a moment, as the admiral finished reading, his head rested wearily upon his hands.

His work here, it appeared, was over.

Upon the authority of the First Lord, he was relieved from further duty as First Sea Lord—Retired. . . . Another man would come to this desk, to this office, would take over these tasks.

The United Kingdom is a democracy, in which ultimate control over and responsibility for all branches of the national life rests in the hands of political figures, the Government, which is in turn responsible to the House of Commons.

The choice of the Admiralty's First Sea Lord was the province of the political First Lord, whose control over the appointment of the responsible personnel at the Admiralty was absolute, subject to the approval of the Government and the support of the Commons.

In making the momentous decision to relieve Jellicoe of his duties and substitute another man, Sir Eric Geddes had been inspired by non-military motives.

But was the change really either necessary or desirable? Was Britain's naval position at that moment actually so secure, in view of the resourcefulness Germany had demonstrated in developing new forms of maritime warfare, that it was wise to dispense with the services of the Empire's most brilliant and successful sailor?

A study of Britain's naval operations during the year 1918 discloses a lack of the clean strategic unity which distinguished them during the three years and a half in which Jellicoe was active in the high command, and which was marred only by ventures carried out despite his disapproval, such as the Dardanelles campaign.

The spark of genius vanished—it was this spark of which Geddes deprived Britain when Jellicoe was told that he was to go on leave immediately.

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The change at the Admiralty must be carried out as though such changes were the most normal thing in the world. Nothing must take place to disturb public confidence.

Jellicoe must put on a mask of stoicism, go on leave, avoid comment.

No sign of disappointment or resentment—neither to-night, nor to-morrow . . . ever.

What a curious, bitter end to a long, active career, from cadet and midshipman to the highest and most responsible duties the navy had to offer. What an unexpected answer to his national services—one hundred and seventy-seven weeks of war leadership through two crises, through battle and the shadow of death.

To leave before it was all over.

Alone of all the commanders on either side, who had been in high authoritative position when the war began, he was the only one who had been truly successful, the only one whose record was distinguished by unbroken triumph.

His war work was done. He could rest now. He would be glad of rest. Yet, as he rose, he knew sadly that the great cycle of his maturity was past—in this instant, as he was set aside, the career that really mattered to him had been terminated. . . .

He would need time to adjust himself.

The organization would go on. The navy would go on, through the weeks and months and years, as it had gone on through the centuries. He had given his life to it—others would take up the burden.

His overcoat.

His hat. . . . A few explanatory words to the clerk. . . . He went out into the silent musty corridor, past the Marine orderly at the door. . . . Salutes greeted him; a passing officer said: "Good night, Admiral! A merry Christmas, sir!"

At the portal the sentry on duty presented arms. . . . The admiral went out into the foggy December night air, dark London war-time night with the cold smell of soot and fog, a small erect man in civilian clothing, past the Horse Guards

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in the direction of Westminster, as unnoticed by the passers-by as on that day in 1914 when he had moved through a crowded railway station towards the scene of his great endeavours.

Jellicoe, late Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, late First Sea Lord of the British Admiralty, was the first of the four principals of Jutland's drama to leave the stage of war's grim and tragic theatre.

Two days after Christmas, on December 27, 1917, *The Times* commented on the change at the Admiralty, in an editorial under the title: "A Chance for Younger Seamen."

The "retirement" of Sir John Jellicoe had just been made public in a brief Admiralty note. A change of Admiralty policy, commented the editorial, was a good thing. Men of the older naval generation had found it impossible to keep pace with the young blood which Sir Eric Geddes was bringing to the Admiralty—the younger men had grown up in an era of discoveries and professional revolution. . . .

Generous tribute was paid the departing Jellicoe—but no mention was made of the Battle of Jutland.

There was criticism of the recent raid upon the Scandinavian convoy by the German light cruisers *Brunner* and *Bremse*, which the newspaper characterized as "unfortunate."

The leading news columns of the same edition, headed "New First Sea Lord," announced that Vice-Admiral Sir Rosslyn Wemyss had been appointed to succeed Admiral Sir John Jellicoe at the Admiralty.

"A peerage for Sir John Jellicoe."

The King had been graciously pleased to confer upon Sir John Jellicoe the dignity of a peerage of the United Kingdom in recognition of his very distinguished services.

With greater or less reserve, all the newspapers commented upon the change. For a day or two there was a flurry of talk.

But this was the holiday season. People wished to forget the war. And it was a changing world . . . the great names of

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1914—Kitchener, Moltke, Ingenohl, Joffre, French, Fisher, Tirpitz—where were they now?

Jellicoe?

Younger blood?

“Censure” for the Battle of Jutland?

What title would the new peer choose?

Perhaps he would turn to the scene of his great battle. There was precedent. . . . Nelson had chosen the Nile, Kitchener had chosen Khartoum.

Would it be Viscount Jellicoe of Jutland?

J. of J.? . . . K. of K. . . .

But the admiral, with a characteristic touch appreciated by all naval men and all others who understood the part he had played in Britain’s victorious command of the sea, turned to the home of the sea-power which had dominated the war, and took his place in the peerage as “Viscount Jellicoe of Scapa.”

CHAPTER XLVI

1918 STRATEGY

THE last and bitterest year of the war was at hand—year of the convoy system, of Russia's departure from the Allied lists, of the American army in France, the continued stubborn heroism of British troops, the doggedness of French and German armies under conditions of warfare which grew progressively more dreadful. The year of Foch and Ludendorff, of Pershing, Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George.

The convoy system defeated the submarine campaign, returning command of the sea to the Allies. After seven acute months in which Germany's U-boats had had the upper hand and all but won the war, the thrust had been checked by the strength of ships guarded by men-of-war.

But there is no such thing as a permanent advantage in methods of warfare. To-day's defence may be to-morrow's weakest spot. If the submarine had had its hour, and the hour of the convoy system was at hand, any month might see another swing of the pendulum. The naval leaders on both sides dwelt ceaselessly upon the convoy—Britain to see whether it could be strengthened, made still more positive in its workings; Germany to see whether it could not be broken down.

The convoy's strength was its power to resist submarines. But it had a weakness. It was vulnerable to surface raids. Could the enemy but bring superior surface strength to bear, could he but sink the defending men-of-war, he would play havoc among the merchant ships.

Germany had seen the opportunity and taken advantage of it. A convoy escorted by two British destroyers and a few armed trawlers sailed daily between Norway and the Shetland Islands.

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On October 17, 1917, Germany had sent two fast light cruisers to raid the group. Coming out of the dawn, the German ships had put both escort destroyers out of action with 135 men killed, and had sunk nine of twelve merchant ships.

On December 12 the raid had been repeated. This time the attacking force had been four German destroyers; they had sunk one British destroyer and four guard trawlers, taking 69 men prisoners; the second British destroyer had been driven off, and all six of the merchant ships had been sent to the bottom.

Was this an indication of weakness in the convoy system? Was it a warning that the naval war would take a new direction—return to active surface fighting? What would be the effect if Germany managed to get ten, twenty raiding cruisers out into the Atlantic?

The daily Scandinavian convoy was replaced by one sailing every four or five days under a stronger escort. How strong should the escort be? If the convoy were more strongly guarded, the temptation to attack it would be all the greater; it now offered the valuable prize of thirty or forty merchant vessels, guarded by a dozen men-of-war, including a dreadnought squadron.

The whole of the problem of active naval warfare had been reopened by this tangible example of the arithmetic of sea-power.

Beatty had grown conservative as a result of his twelve months' fleet command. The man whose only wish had been to rush to death-grips with the enemy at Heligoland Bight, the Dogger Bank and Jutland, had been tempered by intimate, day-by-day consideration of the workings of strategy. At the beginning of 1917, when he was new to the Fleet Flagship, he had believed that he must lead the ships to battle—to a super-Jutland—annihilate the enemy and win the war.

At the beginning of 1918 his point of view had changed. Early in January he stated his views on the North Sea situation to the Board of Admiralty, and followed his verbal statement with a written report at the Admiralty's request.

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"... So long as the enemy remains in his harbours, he is in a position to operate on interior lines and with such forces as he may choose against our vitally important mercantile traffic with the Scandinavian countries. His interior position, and the presence of his agents in neutral ports from which convoys sail, facilitate the execution of surprise attacks with forces stronger than our covering forces. To take an extreme case, it is obviously impossible to have the whole Grand Fleet covering the convoy, whereas it is possible for the whole High Sea Fleet to effect a surprise attack with reasonable prospect of escape to their bases. . . .

"... Accepting the principle that trade must be protected, the deduction to be drawn is that the correct strategy of the Grand Fleet is no longer to endeavour to bring the enemy to action at any cost, but rather to contain him in his bases until the general situation becomes more favourable to us."

This was another Beatty in the *Queen Elizabeth*, than the man on the bridge of the *Lion*, to whom "action" had been the sole answer to every problem of the sea. Fate had thrust the admiral into the cooling bath of high command, had forced the fighter into the rôle of the thinker.

Within a few days the Admiralty's answer to the report arrived in the Flagship.

Their Lordships had placed the Commander-in-Chief's message before the War Cabinet, which had given unanimous expression of approval. . . . The main naval operations were to be conducted against enemy submarines, providing suitable protection to convoys, and continuing mine-laying in the German Bight with every means at the Navy's disposal. . . . Provision must be made to counter any enemy naval movement in the southern North Sea which might threaten the coastal flank of the Allied armies. . . . The strategical security of the Grand Fleet would be guarded by the Intelligence Division, which would give the Commander-in-Chief early information of any impending move by the High Sea Fleet.

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Beatty, whose Grand Fleet had attained the stupendous total of forty-six dreadnoughts (including five of the United States Navy), was committed to a defensive strategy against an enemy fleet whose strength was just half his own. In the circumstances, it was the fullest expression of Britain's sea-power. Ironically, Geddes's "young blood" was discovering the merits of a type of warfare more passive than that waged under the hotly-disputed naval leadership of discarded "ancients."

On land, Germany was rising in a last, most desperate military gesture, blindest of all her efforts.

After 1917's "Siegfried line" warfare, von Hindenburg and Ludendorff were massing grey armies on the Western Front in preparation for the final German offensive. The Peace of Brest-Litovsk had released eighty divisions of troops from the east. In endless succession of trains they were being brought across Germany and concentrated for attack. A mighty ominous foreboding was in the air—all men knew that death would stalk; all men were afraid and grimly heroic; all men felt that the decisive—and worst—phase of the war was at hand, and knew that victory, or peace, or defeat, whatever was to come, would be paid for in such carnage as to hover on the margin of the unbearable.

On both sides men were massing, with tanks and munitions—hundreds of thousands of shells and machine-guns, cannon, aeroplanes and motor-lorries, new and deadly gases, long-range guns, rifles and equipment, barbed wire and food . . . hundreds of thousands of war-weary men in bulky, lousy military clothing, with clumping muddy boots, gas-masks . . . the last men, the last wealth and credit of nations, to be blown away in death and explosion and left to rot in gangrenous desolation.

By March, Ludendorff was ready.

Under cover of the early morning mists of March 21, the assault was launched in the region of St. Quentin. The grey hordes pushed forward—men on foot and in tanks behind, an

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annihilating barrage levelled at enemy positions. Supply and ammunition trains followed the advance.

In a week the progress had been over forty miles—and this war had measured its advances in yards during the past three years. One of the railway lines to Paris had been cut; when the wind was right, Paris could hear the ominous rumble of the guns. Paris itself was being bombarded from behind the German lines.

The Allied retreat left dead and wounded behind—by March 30, the Germans had taken over 80,000 prisoners and 975 British and French cannon. The feeble Portuguese contingent had been swept away. In the two weeks since Ludendorff had begun his offensive, Arras, the Somme, Ypres, bloody words of former years, had come back into history, first of the many milestones of 1918.

If Allied resistance were to harden, supreme command must be placed in the hands of one man, with absolute control over all the armies. Nationality must be forgotten. On April 14, the French Marshal Foch was made Generalissimo of the Allied land forces. The question was that of reinforcements. The war had become a race between the German advance and the number of men which America could place in the field. Pershing had 300,000 American troops in France undergoing final battle training. He would make the gesture of throwing a part of them into the breach, but he knew it could only be a temporary palliative. The Allies must hold on until the arrival of further American troops, masses of troops, troops by the hundred thousand and the million.

But the troops must be got across the Atlantic to Europe, and that would take weeks.

CHAPTER XLVII

SCHEER'S LAST SORTIE

AT this time, as part of the great final effort in which Germany exerted every remaining bit of offensive strength which she could bring to bear, the High Sea Fleet made its last offensive sally.

The movement, coming after a year and a half of North Sea inactivity, was characterized by the British official historian as "perhaps the boldest operation undertaken by the German Naval Staff since the war began," in which the British were, "from first to last, completely baffled."

Yet, of all Germany's operations at sea, it was the most futile and tragic, since its net result was to show the material deterioration of a great fighting machine.

The strategy of the sally was an outgrowth of the German desire to break down the convoy system and take advantage of its weaknesses when attacked on the surface. It was the "next step" in a sequence which had begun with the raids of the *Brunner* and *Bremse*.

Scheer's objective, chosen with the unerring aim of the strategist for the enemy's most vulnerable point, was the spot which Beatty had predicted—the reorganized Scandinavian convoy. The German admiral proposed to go farther abroad than the High Sea Fleet had ever ventured before on a military mission—to sally to the Norwegian coast—and fall upon the convoy. The risks to himself were relatively slight; while if he succeeded he would destroy, in the one action, many merchant vessels and a valuable naval escort.

It was the "extreme case" which the British commander had pointed out to the Admiralty three months previously, when he

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wrote: "It is obviously impossible to have the whole Grand Fleet covering the Scandinavian convoy, whereas it is possible for the whole High Sea Fleet to effect a surprise attack with reasonable prospect of escape to their bases."

Without a hint of warning reaching British ears, Monday night, April 22, found every available ship of the High Sea Fleet assembled in Schillig Road—eighty and more darkened men-of-war, brought together on the pretext that they were to carry out battle-practice on the morrow.

The Command was certain that Wilhelmshaven was alive with enemy agents, and felt it probable that there were traitors among the crews of the fleet. The only answer was to keep the men—and the officers, too—in ignorance, until the fleet was beyond touch of land. Until this afternoon, no one outside the German command had had the slightest idea that the ships were to go beyond the mine-fields.

Men who are inveigled into facing death do so with a different spirit from those who share the confidence of their superiors. But Scheer had no alternative. Secrecy was more important than morale. If his plan leaked out they were all lost.

On this particular date, though the German admiral was unaware of it, London was quite off guard, thanks to secret plans of its own—the surprise naval attack about to fall upon the German submarine harbour at Zeebrugge.

The High Sea Fleet was down at heel and shabby, like a poor relative of the sea force of 1914. There was no German money left for paint, for soap and bright-work polish. The ships were dirtier than men-of-war should be; there was rust on their sides, and for a long time their periods of overhaul and repair had been neglected.

But there would be time enough when the war was over to overhaul worn engines and hard-worked boilers. Thank God, the ships had been built to stand gruelling duty!

Scheer called his squadron commanders together:

SCHEER'S LAST SORTIE

"I am informed by our Intelligence that the Scandinavian convoy will be in favourable position for an attack on the morning of April the 24th. We may expect to find thirty to forty merchant vessels under a naval escort of some strength—possibly one dreadnought squadron. It is reported that the American ships—five battleships—are frequently used for this duty. I hope it will prove to be the case; their destruction would be important to Germany, both at home and abroad.

"We will sail in complete wireless silence to-morrow morning, April the 23rd. Baron von Hipper will proceed with the battle-cruisers seventy miles in advance of the main body; he will attack and destroy the convoy. The fleet will cover the retreat, lending support in case he encounters an enemy detachment too strong to handle. I have sent submarines to lie off the Firth of Forth.

"Success depends upon secrecy. Should the enemy learn of our venture, he will see that the convoy is not where we desire it, and may force us into a battle which, from our point of view, can have no strategic purpose."

Each admiral, commodore and captain present in the great cabin of the Flagship *Baden* felt the returning tingle of adventure for the beleaguered Fatherland. The spirit of the offence still lived. Unexpectedly, after many months, they were to strike again at sea.

This was the last phase of Scheer's fleet strategy, and its keynote was secrecy. He was done with the trap and ambush, done with ventures against the whole of the enemy fleet. To-day his plan, bold as it was, revolved about the avoiding of Britain's battle-line. Britain's fleet had never been so powerful as now; Britain could make short work of him if the fleets met, and the shock of a decisive defeat might spell disaster to the great final offensive.

Yet Scheer was going to sea—farther abroad than ever before—and if he were successful it might be the rejuvenation

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of the Germany navy, the last phase of the naval warfare, the final chapter of the attack upon commerce as the one successful way to destroy Britain.

It was as though the elements had decided to grant every advantage to the German admiral. On only one other occasion during the war had the High Sea Fleet been able to sail without a hint of warning to the enemy. Over two years ago, on Scheer's first cruise as Commander-in-Chief, he had thrust with complete surprise after a year of German naval inactivity.

The present operation was equally mysterious.

At six o'clock on Tuesday morning the fleet was moving at slow speed in a thick, heavy fog which hid the ships in a mantle of invisibility. In the van, ahead of the long column of shadowy grey dreadnoughts, the mine-sweepers were clearing the Horns Reef channel, dragging their sweeps to the accompaniment of repeated concussion. Black, ugly, horned metal globes bobbed to the surface. . . .

Crack! the report of a rifle . . . *b-o-o-m!* the muffled thunder of exploded mine . . . *b-o-o-m! b-o-o-m!*

Von Hipper in the giant *Hindenburg*, last and greatest of the German battle-cruisers, led his force of five capital ships, with four light cruisers and eleven fast destroyers—the raiders.

Farther astern, Scheer, in *Baden*, last and greatest of the German battleships, led nineteen dreadnoughts and the main body of light craft.

By 11.30 the fog, thickening to a pall of impenetrable blindness, forced the fleet to anchor.

On the bridges, commanders, impatient and nervous, paced back and forth. Thus far the poor visibility had favoured the enterprise, but the delay was trying to the spirit, and if it were extended, might allow the convoy to escape. . . . There were more than three hundred miles to steam before reaching the attack area.

Shortly after midday the fleet was under way again. The weather remained thick. When darkness fell they were clear

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of the mine-fields, steaming north, parallel to the Jutland coast. There had been no sign of the British submarines stationed in incessant watchfulness about the German Bight. Scheer concluded that he had broken through without being observed.

He was wrong. He had been observed; but luck had been with him. He had neither been identified nor reported.

Patrolling the outer sector of the Bight, near the Horns Reef, the British submarine *J-6*, had sighted von Hipper's forces steaming through the fog, but her commander had believed they were British battle-cruisers covering British mining operations in that area. Three hours later he had sighted an advance squadron of the High Sea Fleet main body and had come to the same conclusion.

In truth, the very fact that it had been over a year since a German dreadnought had been seen in the North Sea was Scheer's best defence. The submarine *J-6* continued on her station without reporting to London. For if these were British dreadnoughts there was no sense in advertising their presence in a message that might be intercepted by the Germans.

London remained without information that the High Sea Fleet was at sea.

The midnight hours of April 23-24 found the German ships unreported, eighty miles west of the southern tip of Norway, on a northerly course. In every ship the long ruffle of drums beat the crews to quarters. Now at last the men knew—there was to be no battle practice this day, but the prospect of battle. The word spread quickly; for a last moment the German dreadnoughts, strangest of all weapons in a devastating war, made themselves ready to face the foe.

At dawn the battle-cruisers were approaching the limits of the convoy area. Von Hipper stood on the high bridge of the *Hindenburg*, her enormous forward turrets reaching their long guns away beneath him. The ships were driving forward

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in the hard surge and heave of speed, the thrust into salt water which is deep pleasure to the seaman who has been long in harbour. To von Hipper, it was as though the war had gone on all his life—an incredible length of time—and he had led the van in every important naval operation. . . . Not for anything would he trade places, not even with the Fleet Command.

Cigar in his mouth, he searched the horizon, bare of any sign of the convoy. He could see specks that were his own light cruisers and destroyers flung out to scout—the heavy cloud of smoke from forty merchant vessels? . . . Not yet.

Derfflinger, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke* and *Von der Tann* followed the Flagship, pounding out the speed of battle-cruisers, memory of all their conflicts—their raids upon the English coast, their flight at the Dogger Bank, their furious fighting through the hours at Jutland. . . .

A man who has been long with ships comes to love them. There was *Moltke*. . . She had done a lot during the war. Von Hipper had seen her in many dangerous moments, felt her by his side, heard her guns and the crash of metal beating into her—had turned to her at Jutland when all the other battle-cruisers were spent. A good ship . . . a lucky ship.

It would have given him a twinge to know that her great bronze starboard propeller was loosening on its shaft.

She had become a worn old ship, neglected and prone to breakdown.

Shortly before eight o'clock, the screw came adrift and dropped off, whirling down, down, down in skating spirals through the blue water to rest at the bottom of the sea.

The starboard turbine, free of its burden, screeched into a deafening whine. The governor, which should have throttled the steam, failed to operate—before the engine-room crew could grasp what had happened, the turbine had shattered into hundreds of fragments of steel—piping, plating, men were torn with

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flying metal—jets of scalding steam hissed out, and there was a rush and splash of water from the shattered condenser. The starboard engine-room was flooding and water was pouring through holes in the bulkhead into the centre engine-room. The ship lost headway, falling out of column.

The first signal to reach von Hipper said briefly: "Starboard engine out of commission."

Immediately afterwards came a second: "Midships engine out of commission; water coming in; danger from steam; cause not yet ascertained."

The admiral bit heavily upon his cigar, racing over the situation. He had lost a ship.

Moltke would have to shift for herself while he pushed on towards the convoy.

Give her an escort. Order her to fall back upon the Battle Fleet.

He would go on with the four remaining battle-cruisers. Wireless silence?

The Commander-in-Chief must be notified that the battle-cruiser strength had been weakened. It might be the day's decisive factor. Certainly it would influence all the German tactics.

Von Hipper sent, by wireless, the news of *Moltke's* breakdown to Admiral Scheer, and the British Admiralty, intercepting the message, learned for the first time that strong German forces were operating off the coast of Norway. It was more than twenty-four hours since the High Sea Fleet had sailed, and only now the Grand Fleet, lying at Rosyth, was ordered to raise steam for sea.

Within the next few minutes, von Hipper received a message telling of a second German engineering failure.

Von der Tann, at the tail of the column, had fallen astern as *Moltke* sheered out, and was struggling to close up and resume her place behind the leaders. She now signalled the information:

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"Cannot steam at more than 21 knots; cause, bad coal. Coal consumption 50 per cent. higher than normal."

. . . Poverty, poverty, poverty—starvation and blockade—deterioration. . . .

Too much. A man couldn't fight without weapons.

Two ships lost to the battle-cruiser line, out of five.

Von Hipper decided to reduce his speed, keep the squadron compact, allow the main body to close on him. An hour ought to permit *Von der Tann* to clean her fires and get into the reserve bunkers. . . .

But a few minutes later he received further word from the unfortunate *Moltke*. . . . The starboard engine-room was wrecked and flooded, and the ship would have to go into dockyard for new starboard turbines. The centre engine-room was flooded and out of commission; she was trying to pump the water out and discover whether the centre-engine could be restored to service. For the present she was barely able to move, and needed a tow.

If the British fleet were at sea, it would soon be up, perhaps within an hour or two.

Von Hipper turned to stand by the crippled ship and tighten the defences. At 10.30 he had joined *Moltke*, and half an hour later sighted the vanguard of the High Sea Fleet.

Scheer determined upon a general retreat, and ordered the dreadnought *Oldenburg* to take *Moltke* in tow for Wilhelmshaven.

And the convoy?

Von Hipper received orders to make a final search to the northward. But this was the irony of the entire venture's futility. Scheer's information had been wrong. He was at sea on the wrong day. A convoy had passed through this area twenty-four hours earlier; another would appear to-morrow, twenty-four hours after the German ships had gone home. At present there was no ship within three hundred miles of the High Sea Fleet.

The German battle-cruisers, making the last aggressive movement ever carried out by capital ships of the Imperial High

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Sea Fleet, had not the slightest prospect of sighting the enemy they had been sent to attack.

The situation at midnight, April 24-25, found Beatty steaming across the North Sea from the Firth of Forth towards the Skagerrak, in the sole occasion on which he commanded the entire British naval force with definite information that the enemy fleet was abroad and there was possibility of battle.

But Beatty was following the increasingly conservative strategy which dominated his handling of the Grand Fleet, and was not heading where battle was probable, off the entrance to the Horns Reef channel, but far to the north, towards an area where battle could only be joined if the enemy deliberately offered it. This was no bold stroke to cut off the German retreat, but a routine defensive operation to protect the convoy routes and counter a possible northern thrust towards the Atlantic.

The retreating German ships crept southward in unexpected safety, hardly daring to believe that they were free from assault. For twelve hours the speed of the main body had been ten knots, to keep pace with *Oldenburg* and *Moltke*.

In *Moltke*, one of those heroic efforts was being made in which seamen fight to heal the wounds of their ships. The engineering department was giving its best to pump out the centre engine-room and restore it to service. Divers had entered the flooded compartment and plugged the bulkheads to the shattered starboard engine-room. The scummy, oily water was being sucked away, and the engineers were waiting to attack the damage wrought by the flooding.

Von Hipper, whose reconnaissance had been abandoned when no trace of the enemy could be found, was steaming after the fleet.

It was a sad ending to the cruises of Germany's navy during the long years of the war. The fleet's most daring venture had come nearly four years too late, and had been struck down from within by the material failure of neglected ships, no longer fit for the demands of warfare.

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A dozen "ifs"—if Scheer's seaward passage had not been hidden in fog—if the fog had delayed him longer—if *J-6* had identified the German vessels—if British Intelligence had been able to pierce the veil of German secrecy—if Scheer had been rightly informed of the convoy's sailing date—if *Moltke* had not broken down—if either commander, Beatty or Scheer, had really wished for fleet battle . . . any of these "ifs" might have had momentous results.

But dawn of April the 25th found Scheer and von Hipper in company, safely past the line of Beatty's advance. Beatty was searching the area of the Jutland battlefield for the vanished enemy, and turned back at noon towards the Firth of Forth when the Admiralty informed him that the High Sea Fleet was returning to its bases.

All the afternoon Scheer worked his great fleet southward through the mine-fields. . . .

Tortuous hours . . . tortuous miles—tragic homeward plodding of a vanquished navy.

Oldenburg and *Moltke* found the passage strenuous. Twice the tow-line parted—there was more than an hour's delay, and Wilhelmshaven was still seventy miles distant. But after thirty-three hours of unbroken effort, *Moltke* finally managed to get the centre engine-room back into commission, and at dusk on the 25th, dropped her tow and proceeded under her own steam.

This was her salvation. Six miles abreast the Lister Deep, Lieutenant Allen in the British submarine *E-42* sighted "three small tufts of smoke." All day he had been manœuvring to intercept the enemy's return. He ran for half an hour, gaining position to fire his torpedoes——

"Fire!"

"Fire!"

"Fire!"

"Fire!"—The noise of a distant explosion was evidence that the fourth and last torpedo had found its mark. *Moltke* had manœuvred to make it a glancing blow which did not

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prevent her from reaching the River Jade under her own steam a few hours after the High Sea Fleet had passed safely to its anchorage.

. . . Scheer had made his last cruise as Commander-in-Chief of the High Sea Fleet, and had been to sea for the last time in a vessel of the Imperial German Navy.

CHAPTER XLVIII

DEFEAT

THERE were half a million American troops upon French soil. More than a million men would have crossed the Atlantic by July—but not until that time would there be a sufficient number ready to enter the trenches of modern warfare and play a decisive part in the conflict.

The submarines were still braving mine and patrol to push out in search of their prey. Never had they cruised so far, faced greater dangers with greater self-sacrifice—their hunting-grounds were extended to the coast of the United States; they bore the entire burden of the attack upon commerce.

May marked the supreme effort of these determined raiders—and their supreme sacrifice to the most hazardous of all hideous branches of warfare. Of 55 U-boats at sea during the month, 23 never returned.

The Naval Staff had promised Germany that the submarines would prevent American troops from reaching France—but the troop transports were never made the target for concerted attack. The American soldiers must be dealt with by the army—the submarines continued the attempt to starve Britain and check the flow of Allied military material. The war must be won in this last, herculean effort.

But the monthly sinkings of merchant-tonnage were little cause for satisfaction to the German Command.

June found a brief lull as Ludendorff massed his troops for July's operations—the ultimate onslaught which he encouraged his armies to believe would end the war with a German triumph. During the pause the Allies prepared their defences. Paris must be saved. All available American troops, whether their battle

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training was complete or not, must be sent to the front, to the Aisne sector, to hold the line and strike in counter-attack.

July came. . . .

On the 15th, Ludendorff struck. Foch parried—then struck back, and kept hammering, giving the enemy no quarter. British, French and American troops responded to the demand. The Allies began the advance. The tide was turning, and before the end of the month, the great German offensive in Flanders had turned into a nightmare of stubborn defensive retreat.

The uttermost reserves of the German nation had been spent—and had not been enough. Ludendorff had staked everything, and had lost his race against the arrival of the Americans. The millions of shells, the tons of explosive, the armies of men—all had gone, and with them had gone the power of the Empire. Germany was a nation bled white, an empty shell.

And now that she was spent, her armies experienced what Ludendorff described as "the blackest day in the history of the war." The British, delivering a stunning blow, flung unexpected and apparently boundless resources into play in an attack led out of the mist at Amiens by 456 tanks—the most complete surprise of four years' fighting.

The lines in France and Belgium swept eastward, a surge of khaki and horizon-blue.

In August, 1918, Admiral von Holtzendorff, Chief of the Naval Staff, was taken seriously ill, and the question arose of replacing him.

The post was offered to Admiral Scheer, who agreed to accept it on condition that the division of authority and responsibility which had always been such a handicap to the success of the German Naval Command, should be finally eliminated. The bungling in 1914, the inactivity in 1915, the fiasco of the submarine campaign in 1916, the long delay in beginning the submarine campaign of 1917, the present shortage of U-boats—all could be ascribed to the one fact that there had been no single, responsible, operative head of the German Navy. Emperor,

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Chief of the Naval Staff, Secretary of State for the Navy, Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet—all had had their fingers in the game, had been involved in intrigue against each other, had handicapped and checked each other. The Emperor's ignorance of the fleet (he had visited the naval establishment only three times during the war), and his vacillating and indecisive temperament, had been the cause of year-long failure.

In this final crisis of 1918, Scheer, supported by the Army General Staff, demanded that the navy be taken out of the Emperor's control, and that a competent admiral be given sole authority and responsibility with unrestricted powers.

Wilhelm, clutching at straws to save the situation, agreed, and signed away his personal naval command—one of the dearest privileges of his royal rank. Scheer was appointed the new Chief of the Naval Staff, and became Germany's first true naval leader.

Scheer had been the German Jellicoe—the man whom war had thrust first into Fleet Command and then into supreme leadership of the Navy.

It was Scheer's tragedy that in both instances, the emergency had been seen and the command given him, too late—months too late.

What would have been the High Sea Fleet's fortune had Scheer, like Jellicoe, been advanced to the Fleet Command in 1914, to take charge with positive leadership which did not shrink from battle?

What would have been Germany's destiny had Scheer been given authoritative powers and made Chief of the Naval Staff at the end of 1916, when Britain was calling Jellicoe to be First Sea Lord?

Scheer's was the tragedy of delay. He was the only German naval leader whose powers in any way approached Jellicoe's, who might have saved the situation for Germany if he had been given more time and better strategic factors—but he was not called upon until the situation had become too involved for any man to save.

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It was the middle of August, 1918, when Admiral Scheer hauled down his flag from the Fleet Flagship *Baden* and turned over the Fleet Command to Admiral von Hipper. If Scheer was following in Jellicoe's footsteps, von Hipper was curiously paralleling the career of Beatty, and now had risen to the command afloat.

Scheer went to German General Head-quarters at Spa, full of confidence that he could still do the miraculous, create fresh forces, reorganize the submarine service, revolutionize submarine production, send U-boats to sea in such numbers that they would turn the scale in 1919. The one necessary factor was time—he needed between six months and a year.

Closeted in a room of the Hôtel Britannique—ominous name for German General Head-quarters—he conferred with von Hindenburg and General Ludendorff, discussing the final phase of Germany's strategy.

Last week's British attack at Amiens had demonstrated the decline of the German armies' offensive power. The enemy was now superior in number of men and in material resources. The General Staff had informed the Emperor that peace negotiations ought to be opened before the situation grew worse. One could not say that the outlook was truly unfavourable—it was merely that Ludendorff could no longer see the possibility of a decisive land victory. Yet there was no cause to anticipate a defeat. The armies had been ordered to give ground, operating to take such a toll of the enemy for every kilometre of soil abandoned, that the foe's will to win would be shattered and the enemy nations would embrace peace on terms not unfavourable to Germany.

How long could the army maintain such a defensive?

Months, Ludendorff thought. Perhaps years. The normal annual supply of reserves was sufficient to carry on strictly defensive warfare for a most extended period. The sole provision was that Germany's Allies, Bulgaria, Turkey and Austria-Hungary, should prevent enemy penetration from the south.

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Germany no longer had the man-power to redeem, as she had done before, the fiascos of her associates.

Could one reckon upon holding out through the coming winter and carrying the war into 1919?

Yes. The things Ludendorff lacked were men and material sufficient for attack, and the only reason he was willing to consider peace negotiations was that he no longer believed in victory.

Scheer, just assuming command and given broad powers to turn dreams into actuality, felt that the entire problem revolved about the year 1919. In that year Germany would at last have sufficient submarines to command the sea.

Three hundred submarines for the year 1919! Sea-power! Not even the convoy system could withstand their attack. Captains and crews for three hundred submarines would be trained, torpedoes manufactured, the boats built.

Three hundred submarines—was there fuel to operate them?

Yes, the navy had ample fuel reserves. But the army must see that the submarines were manufactured. Forty to sixty thousand workmen must be released from military service and returned to the shipyards, to be driven in day and night shifts, in clatter of rivet-hammers and flare of oxy-acetylene torch.

Forty to sixty thousand men——

It was in man-power that Germany was weakest.

It must be done, said Scheer. The general must go over his figures, revise his estimates——

Ludendorff promised to do what was possible.

In the pulse of uncertainty which spread through Germany during the summer days of 1918, the plans of generals and admirals assumed a strange inconsequentiality—dreams predicated upon illusions and unwillingness to face the truth.

As Scheer and Ludendorff discussed the possibility of finding 40,000 men for the shipyards, the number of deserters from the front lines had passed the quarter-million mark; within the next sixty days it increased to half a million. In many of the

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eastern garrisons, whose troops had been included in estimating the total strength of the last reserve, there was an increasing spirit of Bolshevism—men who had seen the freedom of Russia's soldiers were openly resentful of Prussian discipline. In the civil populace, the fifty million men, women and children behind the front, the spirit was at the point of breaking—Imperial Germany was a house of cards.

Scheer turned to the task before him with all energy. Extraordinary schemes were set in operation—titanic ventures—the whole gigantic plan of 1919's submarines . . . keels were laid, hulls began to take shape—the energy which might have overturned the world if applied to Germany's sea-power in 1914—again in 1916—was being unleashed in furious, desperate haste in 1918 when everything was lost—a fantastic dream of the impossible.

Couldn't the man realize that these projects were trifling compared with the forces being unleashed on the other side? Could Scheer dream of mile-long shipyards sprung up out of the mud along the Delaware River—of hundreds of destroyers, thousands of anti-submarine vessels, thousands of cargo-carriers, mines and depth-charges by the hundred thousand. . . . Could he dream of the enemy's 1919? Could he hear the clatter of steel in the enemy countries, the marching of men?

Could he feel the unrest, the confused animal fear which had crept into Germany?

The end came with stunning suddenness.

Scheer had accompanied the Emperor on a visit to the Submarine Training School at Kiel. For the fourth time since 1914 His Majesty saw a portion of the naval establishment with his own eyes.

Kiel had changed since the colourful, festive days before the war. Dressed in the uniform of an Admiral of the Fleet, Wilhelm inspected the torpedo manufactory, the Imperial Naval Dockyard—everywhere he saw ingenuity and invention,

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machinery undergoing tests, furnaces pouring out molten metal, torpedoes being given trial, men being trained——

Everywhere he saw threadbare clothing, haggard faces, poverty——

Standing on the quarter-deck of the school-ship, he addressed the future submarine commanders:

"The Fatherland will not be disappointed in the hopes which it places in you. . . ."

Before the tour was ended, telegraphic information reached the Emperor asking him to return immediately to General Headquarters at Spa for conference.

Ludendorff's worst fears had been realized. The one thing which he had made up his mind Germany could not survive had taken place. Bulgaria had collapsed, and with her the Central Powers' structure of defence had been thrown out of joint—an open breach lay in the south-eastern flank, and Ludendorff could not see where troops were to be found to stop the gap. His preparations for the winter, his carefully considered troop dispositions that were to hold the Western Front—all appeared disrupted.

And Ludendorff's spirit had snapped. A shattered man, he was crying, panic-stricken, that he must have an immediate armistice unless Germany was to be routed and invaded.

From now on, panic spread into Germany, filtering through the masses from the top down, sowing the seeds of unreasoning confusion. The question of collapse and complete defeat was only a matter of days.

On the other side, the spirit of victory had risen to a triumphant height.

No one anticipated the cataclysmic, sudden end. It was October—and no one knew that November would be the month of victory.

The armies drove forward in open warfare, thrusting their enemy back savagely, beating with irresistible regularity. The convoys of transports were landing thousands of fresh troops

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. . . winter lay ahead; it would be a winter of fighting, but the spirit of victory was in the air.

In the North Sea, the Grand Fleet continued its ceaseless watch. The North Sea Mine Barrage had been completed; aeroplane carriers drove south towards the German coast and carried the naval war inland.

It was a world of war risen to its final height, its greatest number of men, its greatest wealth of material—in all the world, there was no other thought than war, the will to victory—and in the Central Powers, the panic of defeat.

CHAPTER XLIX

MUTINY AND SURRENDER

AT the very end, the High Sea Fleet rose in mutiny and revolt not only against the Fleet Command, but against the Government.

In those last confused days of the war, after it was known that the Government was seeking an armistice, the spirit of war drained out of the fleet as it drained from the nation. The sailors ceased, in spirit, to be military men, and became the citizens who had answered the call to mobilization in 1914—realized that the war was over and unhappily lost, that their duty was done—waited for one thing alone, release, so that they could return home to pick up their interrupted lives.

Meantime Scheer, at General Head-quarters, was living in the spell of the military debacle.

Germany had been forced to abandon the submarine campaign. The naval coast-defence artillery stations in Flanders had been evacuated. The Government was granting every demand made by the enemy. Head-quarters waited in dread of news that the slender thread of morale which bound the army together, had collapsed in the greatest of all military disasters, with broken front penetrated by an invading enemy.

The Emperor was a weak figure of helplessness, turning from one adviser to another—following none. Ludendorff now argued that Germany must go on with the war, that he would put 500,000 non-combatant reservists and school-children into the trenches and hold out through the winter. The new Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, was negotiating with the

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enemy, willing to make any concession to avoid further bloodshed. The new Cabinet was made up of Socialists and Liberals, out of sympathy with the military.

Scheer thought of the High Sea Fleet's dreadnoughts lying idle at Wilhelmshaven—twenty-four capital ships—while the army bore the brunt of the disaster. If he could only bring the battleships ashore, interpose them between the German retreat and the enemy's pursuit! If only he could do something to protect the naked army flank in Flanders, left bare by the withdrawal of the naval coast-artillery. If he could only make some gesture, some stroke in Germany's favour, to prevent the holocaust that seemed imminent.

Of all Germany's weapons, only one still had the strength—more, the man-power, of 1914. The fleet had gone through four years and a half, and lived, alone of all the forces which had mobilized under fluttering banners in that remote August. The Emperor had had his wish—not one battleship was missing from her place in the line.

Scheer, brooding over the disaster, was betrayed by his emotions into the greatest of all the mistakes made by German leaders during the closing days of the war—the mistake which plunged the nation into civil war and led to the debacle which Head-quarters and Government alike were trying to avoid.

As Chief of the Naval Staff, Scheer, without consulting either the Chancellor, the Cabinet, or the Army, issued secret orders to Admiral von Hipper at Wilhelmshaven, sent by word of mouth the last week in October.

"The High Sea Fleet is to be made ready for attack and battle with the English Fleet."

" . . . You will go to sea in full strength, to lie off the Flanders coast and ward off a possible enemy thrust towards the flank of the retreating Army."

When Admiral von Hipper attempted to carry out these orders on October 29, 30 and 31, the men of the fleet rose in a spontaneous mutiny which spread until it became the German revolution.

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It was more than a mutiny. It was the collapse of a military and political system which fell apart because it had failed—the downfall of an Empire whose Emperor was putty.

When a world falls apart, when men feel that it is neck or nothing, they cease to think of uniforms and crowns, of gold braid and authority, but judge their fellows as men—and if their superiors are failures, then there is no leadership in this catastrophic hour, and every man shifts for himself.

Head-quarters itself had begun the mutiny. Ludendorff, Scheer, Max von Baden, the Emperor—all pulled in different directions, none trusting the other, each blindly following his own instincts, not one strong enough to command the others. Scheer's very order to von Hipper had been revolt.

The uprising in the fleet began because the men grasped the truth that it was useless for them to go to sea at all. There was no threat to the Flanders coast. They could do nothing to ameliorate the situation. The operation was the gesture of a defiant Scheer thinking in the circles of defeat, striking blindly. It emanated from a German General Head-quarters which had become a madhouse.

The citizen-sailors, proletarians drafted into sailors' uniforms, suddenly realized that the entire war had been equally insane—that the command to take Paris in 1914 had been the same folly as the command for the High Sea Fleet to go to sea now that the war was lost.

Younger officers were babbling *hara-kiri* nonsense that battle with the British would redeem the fleet's "honour"—that they must go down with flags flying and guns blazing, choosing an heroic death in battle to life in a defeated country.

Reality?

At Head-quarters, feudal patriots were urging the Emperor to enter the trenches and take his place at the head of his troops—to die like a man if need be—he who had sent so many hundreds of thousands of men to their deaths.

The Emperor was refusing.

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That was reality.

As the Emperor refused, so the fleet refused.

Who were the sailors to die as a feudal symbol? The sailors had ceased to be sailors—ceased to be one with the great glittering feudal-military structure, and become harried individuals who wanted to return to their little existences, their homely villages, the poor rooms in city slums—their strata of mass life, condemned to poverty but given the boon of life. What was to be gained by spilling their blood, when so much had been spilled—in vain?

The fleet's mutiny appeared first as agitation, a few men addressing their uneasy comrades on the afternoon of October 29 as the ships assembled in Schillig Road. . . . The agitators were arrested.

Next day two dreadnoughts were in open revolt, and von Hipper was forced to postpone his operation for twenty-four hours while he attempted to deal with the mutineers.

On the following day, when the command to go to sea was repeated, the revolt became violent—anchor-gear was smashed, electric generators were beaten apart with sledge-hammers, boiler-fires were drawn and extinguished.

Von Hipper, recognizing reluctantly that the situation had attained proportions which made it impossible to carry out his orders, cancelled the proposed operation and turned his attention to quelling the mutinies with force—cannon and torpedo-tubes were trained upon the revolting ships, and the mutineers were arrested—several hundred men. . . . Within twenty-four hours they had fraternized with their guards and vanished into the countryside.

The fleet was calm. . . . The ships had been scattered, each squadron sent to a different harbour so that the officers might soothe the agitated spirits of the men. But the spark had been struck—like igniting fire-damp the mutinies broke out again. Squadron III, at Kiel, established contact with the sailors and workers ashore—overnight, 80,000 men were swept by the fire of independence.

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This was more than mutiny. Revolutionary demands appeared. A gigantic sailors' and workers' parade was met with shots from a naval patrol. . . . The eighty thousand became rebels, tearing down the Imperial colours and hoisting the red flag. Officers were deposed, the Naval Governor was powerless.

At this stage the revolt could have been suppressed by a battalion of determined infantry, for the sailors, though armed, were poorly led and had little heart for fighting. There was infantry at hand, willing and ready to do the work—but the Government in Berlin issued an order that there was to be no bloodshed.

The revolt spread wider.

From Kiel it went west to Brunsbüttel and Wilhelmshaven, contaminated Squadron I, leaped to Squadron IV, got a foothold in the destroyers and battle-cruisers. Sailors wearing red brassards went inland to preach revolution in the streets of Hamburg, Bremen, Hanover.

Within a week of the first disturbance the Imperial German Navy had ceased to exist as a military organization. The ships, filthily dirty, lay under the red flag, commanded by newly-elected Sailors' Councils; half the officers were in flight, the others had remained to attempt to reorganize some sort of fighting power as "military advisers" to the Sailor Soviets. . . . The war still went on.

Revolutionary bluejackets spread all through Germany, sounding the tocsin, joining themselves to the revolutionary organizations of the Radical parties, calling on the army garrisons to hoist the red flag and participate in the movement. The Government appeared paralysed; Army Head-quarters belatedly sent a division of troops from the front to fight the revolt—only to learn that the troops had joined the revolutionaries as soon as they reached the Rhine.

Scheer remained at Spa, one of the small group urging the Emperor to follow the warrior tradition whose garments he had always worn, and set an example of courage and hardihood to the nation.

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Wilhelm steadfastly refused, but as steadfastly opposed the counsels of the contrary group which advised him to abdicate.

Von Hipper, at Wilhelmshaven, proved incapable of dealing with a political emergency—an officer whose thinking machinery stopped as soon as his subordinates failed to obey orders. His one resource, the use of the coterie of followers which remained loyal to him, in an attempt to put down the revolution by force, was denied him by order of the Government in Berlin—and like almost all the other officers, he himself faithfully obeyed orders at a time when individual initiative was the only thing that could have saved the situation. Rendered powerless, he capitulated, and endured the disgrace of having an irresponsible stoker adventurer proclaim himself successor of the Fleet Command—von Hipper remained to work as this man's assistant.

On the evening of Saturday, November 9, Wilhelm abdicated, the most despicable figure of his day, and took flight to Holland. The next morning Berlin fell to the revolution, and before the day was over Germany had been proclaimed a Republic; a Provisional Government had replaced the monarchy, and the nation was celebrating in wild hysteria, with red-badged sailors leading every frenzied procession.

The war went on. Only on Monday, November 11, at five o'clock in the morning, was the Armistice Agreement finally signed. Hostilities came to an end six hours later.

The price paid by Germany for the cessation of active warfare, was the delivery to her enemies of all material which would have made it possible for her to renew the conflict—cannon, aeroplanes, munitions, railway equipment, motor-lorries, submarines, machine-guns, trench-mortars, battleships, battle-cruisers and light craft. Her fleet was to be disarmed, her armies were to withdraw inside the German borders; she was to release all enemy prisoners at once. The blockade was to continue. Defenceless, the newly-born republic was to approach the Peace negotiations at the mercy of whatever terms the enemy chose to grant.

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As the fighting stopped, the only portions of the German navy which were still loyal to the monarchical regime, were a part of the light cruiser and destroyer forces, the submarine service, and the Zeppelin and seaplane units.

A submarine had dealt the Imperial Navy's last blow when, on November 9, the homeward-bound *UB-50* torpedoed and sank the 16,000-ton British pre-dreadnought *Britannia* in the Straits of Gibraltar.

The Great War was over, but with the cessation of hostilities there remained the carrying out of the Armistice agreement, the laying down of arms by defeated Germany.

The conditions imposed by the victors demanded that sixteen German dreadnought battleships and battle-cruisers, eight light cruisers, and fifty destroyers, be delivered up for internment under the supervision of a neutral government—or if no suitable neutral harbour was available, under the supervision of the enemy Allies—to be kept under guard until the Peace negotiations determined their final disposition.

The week following the signing of the Armistice found the German naval bases a scene of confused, hurried activity, as all factions of the disrupted navy united to strip the red-flagged ships of their fighting power, removing breech-plugs and fire-controls from the guns, emptying the magazines of ammunition, preparing for the voyage and internment. Fourteen dreadnoughts were to go at once; the other two were in dock, and would follow as soon as they could be made ready for sea.

By demand of the enemy, the High Sea Fleet was being emasculated, shorn of strength. No German voice was raised in resistance to this demand. Mutineers and royalists alike were agreed that the Armistice terms must be meticulously carried out—the officers through anxiety to avoid the threatened British occupation of the German harbours; the revolutionary sailors through fear that the ships might fall into the hands of counter-revolutionaries. The one anxiety was that the tremendous task

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of disarming the fleet should be thoroughly carried out in the short time allowed.

Unskilled hands despoiled the ships—it was as though a destructive storm swept through them. Discipline had gone; there was wholesale looting. Everyone knew, instinctively, that the High Sea Fleet would never face battle again.

But despite all the turmoil and confusion, the "Internment Unit" was ready to sail on November 19 and on that day, after assembling in Schillig Road, lifted anchor under the dual command of Rear-Admiral Ludwig von Reuter, charged with navigation and military leadership, and a "Supreme Sailors' Council" of revolutionary sailors, charged with the maintenance of discipline. The "Internment Unit's" destination was the Firth of Forth, where the ships were to undergo inspection by the British, to see that they were disarmed, before proceeding under guard to the internment harbour.

As for the port of internment, the German Government had not yet been notified of the Allies' intentions. But there had never been any serious question of allowing the defeated men-of-war to be interned in neutral waters. The only neutral Government strong enough to undertake the custody of dreadnoughts was Spain, and Spain had rejected the Allies' proposal. The harbour decided upon for the German ships' safe-keeping was British Scapa Flow, and the Royal Navy was to assume their guardianship in trust for the Allies.

For the time being, the ships were still German property. German crews would remain aboard them. In the strict sense of the word, they still represented Germany's sovereignty and their decks were German "territory."

Yet for men-of-war to lay down their arms and submit themselves to the custody of an armed enemy, was spiritual surrender to a superior might. For the Germans to give themselves up, was the final phase of the Battle of Jutland—helplessness and surrender to the victors of the battle-field, in the helplessness imposed upon the High Sea Fleet

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when Jellicoe hoisted his signal to deploy on the afternoon of May 31, 1916.

This strangest of voyages was the High Sea Fleet's crucifixion. The last occasion on which German and British dreadnoughts had met had been at Jutland. . . . The last occasion on which they had met without hostilities had been at Kiel in 1914.

On both occasions they had come together as equals. This was the aftermath—humility and defeat. A fleet of supported capital ships, very nearly the strength of the forces wielded by Schœer when the German navy was at its height, was delivering itself weaponless into enemy waters, offering itself for imprisonment, confessing itself done with the war, manned by the very men who had fought its guns in battle during the days of its power.

This was reality—triumph of the will to live. But the men who participated, on both sides, found it totally unreal, impossible to comprehend. It was the final negation of an era of hostility, the undoing of the forces set in motion eighteen years before when Germany had decided to build this fleet and with it to challenge the supremacy of the world.

To-day these dreadnoughts had ceased again to be dreadnoughts, and become so much scrap iron, to be dumped on the heap of the war's rusting weapons.

Perhaps the dawn of reason?

No . . . it was not reason. Rather the triumph of crude strength—the answer to Jutland. The German men, overwrought and beaten, lived in a fantasy of defeat in which they hoped for sympathy and understanding . . . and the British, with the contradiction of human nature, despised the actions of the enemy whose helplessness closed the cycle of British victory.

The honour of completing the year-long work, which he had shared with Lord Fisher, builder of Britain's forces, and Lord Jellicoe, their leader in battle, fell to Admiral Beatty.

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He led the Grand Fleet to sea before dawn on November 21, departing from the Firth of Forth with Britain's total strength.

For Britain, it was the war's last grand naval operation. For the last time the ships were cleared for action, shell and powder ready at the guns, gas-masks and asbestos dress served out, crews at battle-stations. One hundred and fifty destroyers headed the movement into the North Sea, followed by six squadrons of light cruisers, one squadron of armoured cruisers, two squadrons of battle-cruisers, five squadrons of dreadnought battleships—a total of two hundred and twenty-nine ships of the Grand Fleet, including five American dreadnoughts. Three French vessels accompanied the formation as representatives of the French Navy.

It was a fair day, with a surface mist, late autumn North Sea weather. The British destroyers sighted the German vessels shortly after dawn, plodding slowly through the sea in single column, *Seydlitz* leading, followed by *Derfflinger*, *Von der Tann*, *Hindenburg*, *Moltke*, and by the battleships, cruisers and torpedo-craft . . . forlorn, dirty vessels, bearing bedraggled evidence of the mutinies and revolution.

These were ships which had once belonged to a navy. To-day they had returned to that impersonality which men-of-war hold while they are in the builders' hands, impersonal as coal-barges being delivered here across the North Sea in accordance with a contract.

Kiel Week . . . Jutland. . . .

The vessels of the Grand Fleet, as they came up, took station on either side of the German column . . . the main body abreast the German dreadnoughts, the destroyers enveloping the German destroyers, so that the ships from Wilhelmshaven steamed, prisoners, through a moving shackle of British men-of-war, ships which had been "the enemy" and were now the victors. Far ahead, reaching out of sight into the mist, the Grand Fleet light cruisers slid forward; far astern, coming up in endless flotilla movement, the destroyers kept their stations. The course was set for the Firth of Forth.

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In all Britain's vessels, guns were ready to swing out towards the Germans on the slightest provocation; battle-flags flew at the mastheads.

The Germans had not expected such a reception. . . . They had lost faith in the men who had told them that battle was fine and splendid. They had stripped their ships. They would fire no gun to-day. They were numbed men, behaving as they thought best for their country. . . . Far from using this moment for resistance, they were concerned with obeying the superior will of the conquering powers.

Only later, when they discovered that they were viewed with contempt as "Huns," and learned that they were to be interned at Scapa Flow, rather than in the anticipated Scandinavian ports, did their resentment grow.

The Grand Fleet proceeded on either hand in aloof superiority.

This was the pageant of Jutland victory, the pageant of four years and a half of completed, faithful duty. With this day the Grand Fleet would find release from battle and war—men who had left their homes for the "test mobilization" of 1914 were free to think of home again, to realize that the enemy, which had been the real reason for their activities during all these years, had ceased to be a danger, had ceased to exist, was here a prisoner.

In 1914 he had been driven into harbour by British prestige. . . . In 1916 he had been vanquished by British strength. . . . In 1918 he had surrendered to British victory.

British sea-power ruled the seas.

The passage back to harbour was done. Early in the afternoon the German unit had come to anchor in the outer portion of the Firth of Forth under a guard of half the Grand Fleet. The remainder of the fleet swept on to its berths above and below the Forth Bridge. With stiff formality, a group of ranking British officers was conferring with Admiral von Reuter in the cabin of the *Friedrich der Grosse*, notifying the

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Germans of the restrictions placed upon them by their guards and preparing for the inspection of the German ships on the morrow.

In every way the occasion had been a British triumph, shared by every man and every ship present, and culminating in the ovations rendered to the Commander-in-Chief. The crews of Britain's ships had cheered their admiral to the echo; he had been photographed, quoted, hailed as a conqueror; thousands of words describing the surrender had been telegraphed to the newspapers of the world. On this day Beatty, who delivered to the British nation the gift longed for for many years—the German fleet in custody—rose to the very pinnacle of his extraordinary fame and popularity.

Forgotten in retirement, the two men who had achieved and earned this victory for British sea-power, had not been invited to be present at the German fleet's surrender. Admiral Lord Fisher, creator of Britain's ships, re-awakener of the spirit of war in the Royal Navy . . . Admiral Lord Jellicoe, who had forged the Grand Fleet into an incomparable fighting machine, had redeemed the Jutland failure of the battle-cruisers and presented an impenetrable barrier to the enemy . . . sat at home in obscurity while the third of the triumvirate received the nation's adulation.

The memory and spirit of the departed commanders, however, was strong in the fleet . . . hundreds of officers and men had thought of Jutland and Jellicoe as they looked across at the grey ships which they had last seen spitting fire, and dwelt on the unforgettable hours at battle-stations in the heat of action. And many affectionate, congratulatory telegrams and letters went to the absent admirals.

At last British and German ships lay anchored again side by side.

What changes had come with the years! Four years and a half ago, after Kiel Week, Admiral Warrender had sent a parting message to his German hosts: "Friends in the past, friends for ever."

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The next signal to be exchanged between the two fleets was sent by Admiral Beatty on the afternoon of November 21, 1918. Its wording was stern, and carried all the burden of the years between:

"The German flag will be hauled down at sunset, and will not be hoisted again without permission."

CHAPTER I

END OF THE FLEETS

NOT only was the German fleet disarmed and surrendered—within a few months after the defeat it disappeared completely from the seas. Its brief span of life had seen it rise to second place among the world's navies, greater than any other sea power except Britain's. Vanquished, it vanished in swift and sweeping phenomenon, until of its hundreds of fighting ships only a small handful survived—the rest came to their end in total destruction and annihilation.

In round numbers, Germany had produced two million tons of combatant vessels, completed or begun, since 1900—a fleet of over thirteen hundred men-of-war, which represented her bid for power and which vanished to become a memory. Two episodes, the Battle of Jutland and the defeat of the unrestricted submarine campaign of 1917, had rendered her sea forces futile and powerless, and the figures of her loss revealed the extraordinary magnitude of the victory.

From 1914 onwards, seven German battle-cruisers, nineteen dreadnought battleships, six armoured cruisers, thirty-seven light cruisers, two hundred and eighty-three destroyers and torpedo-boats, three hundred and ninety-nine submarines, eighty-three dirigible airships, and dozens of auxiliaries—mine-sweepers, mine-layers, etc.—came to their ends.

In addition, two uncompleted battle-cruisers, two dreadnought battleships, five light cruisers, one hundred and two destroyers, and four hundred and eleven submarines, were broken up as they lay in the building yards.

Drama and spectacle accompanied the Imperial Navy's destruction. The seaworthy submarines were surrendered to

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the Royal Navy at Harwich—vessels which had made possible the fierce campaigns of commerce destruction, in which German seamen had endured peril and hardship and the world's mariners had suffered unprecedented and irreparable onslaught. An atmosphere of ruthlessness overhung the surrendering ships, their low length and squat guns, the conning-towers and periscopes from which so many attacks had been directed. Given into British hands, the Imperial colours hauled down and replaced by the white ensign, they were moored row upon row to serve as a tragic recollection of the war until they found their way to the ship-breakers.

At Scapa Flow, the interned battle-line of the High Sea Fleet lay anchored for seven months, the crews reduced to a number just sufficient to preserve the German ships from storm and deterioration.

The ultimate disposition of the seventy-four vessels was a world problem. Proposals for their destruction, made by the larger Powers, were objected to by the smaller Powers, who wished to incorporate them into their own navies.

Aboard the ships themselves, bitter disillusionment replaced the hopes with which their people had faced internment. Officers and men alike now realized that the ships would never be returned to Wilhelmshaven.

On June 21, 1919, through misunderstanding and lack of information, Admiral von Reuter came to the conclusion that the war was to be resumed at noon. It was the fifth day of a five-day ultimatum presented to Germany, at the end of which, if she had not signed the Peace Treaty, hostilities were to recommence. The German admiral lacked knowledge that this ultimatum had been extended for two days, until June 23.

On the morning of June 21, in the absence of the British guard squadron, von Reuter hoisted the signal to scuttle the "Internment Unit," and thus German seamen finally determined the destiny of the chief units of German sea-power.

Fifty of the seventy-four interned ships—all the battle-cruisers, all but one of the battleships, all but three of the light

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cruisers—went to the bottom in a tremendous cataclysmic spectacle of self-destruction, abandoned by their people after the sea-cocks were opened. Only one or two of the surviving ships escaped major damage from flooded hulls, stranding and partial submersion. In later years many of the sunken vessels were salvaged and broken up for metal, but a few of Germany's dreadnoughts remain deep under the waters of Scapa Flow, invisible monuments to the World War triumph of the Grand Fleet.

Squadron I, which had remained in German harbours, survived only a little longer. Under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, the eight earliest German dreadnoughts were surrendered, and came to their ends at foreign hands—six were given to the ship-breakers, two sunk by the gunfire and bombs of enemy target practice.

A few of the surrendered German light cruisers and destroyers were incorporated into the victorious navies; the rest were broken up.

By the terms of Peace, the German Republic was restricted to a navy of six small battleships, six light cruisers, twelve torpedo-boats and twelve destroyers—thirty-six combatant vessels as successors to the great fleets of the Monarchy.

The Grand Fleet likewise vanished, now that the threat which had called it into being was past.

As a fleet it ceased officially to exist on April 7, 1919, when Britain's naval establishment was reorganized into Home and Atlantic Fleets. Beatty, just made an Admiral of the Fleet, issued his last General Order and hauled down his flag.

The Washington Conference of 1922 found Britain agreeing to reduce her battle-line to twenty, and then to eighteen, dreadnoughts. At the London Conference of 1930 the number was cut still further, to fifteen.

Lion, Tiger, King George V, Colossus, Benbow, Marlborough . . . Southampton, Onslow, Fearless . . . these and many others

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disappeared before the cutting tools which scrapped their plating and returned their metal to the melting-pot.

In 1933 only a handful of the ships which fought at Jutland were still afloat.

In the Royal Navy, *Barham*, *Warspite*, *Malaya*, *Royal Oak* and *Revenge* were still active in the battle-line.

Iron Duke was a gunnery training ship. *Centurion* had been disarmed for use as a target.

The light cruisers *Constance*, *Comus* and *Castor* were in reserve. *Champion* was a training ship. The flotilla-leader *Abdiel* was in reserve.

The battleship *Canada*, under construction for Chile at the outbreak of the war under the name *Almirante Latorre* and requisitioned for Grand Fleet, had been delivered to the Chilean Navy when the war was over, and was serving there under her original name.

In the post-war German fleet, the pre-dreadnought Jutland veterans *Schleswig-Holstein*, *Schlesien*, *Hannover* and *Hessen* were still in active service.

The light cruiser *Pillau*, originally under construction for Russia under the name *Mooraviev Amursky*, had been surrendered to Italy and was serving in the Italian navy under the name *Bari*.

This little company of eighteen ships, flying four flags, was all that remained of the vast assemblage of two hundred and fifty-two fighting craft which had faced each other with guns cleared for action on the misty May afternoon in 1916.

CHAPTER LI

THE JUTLAND CONTROVERSY

PEACE had come—incredible Peace! Khaki and blue uniforms were being put away . . . The bewildered world set out to discuss its experience and its memories, conscious that an epoch had terminated.

Out of Britain's fifty-two months' welter of remembrances, the "mystery" of Jutland revived to claim first place. . . . In the peculiar post-war scene of demobilized men, workers without employment, the first doles, former officers trying to adapt themselves to civilian life . . . news from Versailles, Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations . . . H. G. Wells . . . G. B. Shaw . . . cocktails and flappers, motor-cars, the Labour Party led by a pacifist politician named Ramsay MacDonald . . . in the strange hectic Britain-after-the-war, the question of what had really happened at Jutland became the centre of one of the greatest controversies that ever stirred the British public, a controversy filled with bitter partisanship, in which the entire British nation divided into two opposing camps, and every man was either for Beatty and against Jellicoe, or for Jellicoe and against Beatty . . . a fierce wordy contest marked on the whole by blind devotion to idols, by ignorance, bigotry and misstatement.

One indisputable fact brought the whole subject back into the foreground. German battleships and battle-cruisers which the Admiralty had reported—and the public had believed—"sunk at Jutland" in 1916, appeared whole and sound in the "Internment Unit" which Rear-Admiral von Reuter brought to the Firth of Forth on November 21, 1918, and lived to be scuttled at Scapa Flow in June, 1919.

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The Press immediately began to speculate anew on the accuracy of all official statements made about Jutland during the war.

What were the facts about Jutland?

In a rush of misconceptions just after the Armistice, the British public decided that the truth was out at last—the battle had indeed been lost opportunity and defeat, as had always been suspected. Britain was inclined to cynicism.

The one item which had stayed the adverse judgments of 1916, and checked the belief that Germany's claims to victory were justified, had been the Admiralty's positive announcement that Germany's losses had been heavier than Britain's—not merely relatively, but absolutely. Jellicoe's report had repeated statistics to this effect.

The public had waited through the years to learn whether these statements were true, or whether they were war-time propaganda.

Now they had the answer.

Germany's figures had been more nearly correct than Britain's.

How could one explain it? The fleet had been strong—capable enough—its strength was proved by the ultimate victory. The answer must have lain not in the fleet, but in its leadership. Jellicoe, the discountenanced, the man who had been removed from the Fleet Command, sent to Whitehall, ultimately retired, had been responsible. The Admiralty had guarded its secrets closely, but one could remember that the very first newspaper accounts had asked where the Commander-in-Chief had been—why the battle-cruisers had not been supported. . . . Then the quietus had been applied.

One could read through the lines now. It was obvious—Beatty had been given the Grand Fleet leadership because he had been successful at Jutland. His leadership had won the war. Jellicoe had been retired in a mysterious "hush," made a viscount—but the victorious Beatty had been made an earl. Jellicoe had been given a gratuity of £50,000, but Beatty had been given £100,000. The Government had known how to judge the relative merits of the two men.

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The time had come for revelation of the details of Jellicoe's failure, to satisfy the public curiosity with the secrets of 1916. So much had been said and written—everyone had known it was only to deceive the enemy and "encourage" the home public. It would be good to learn the truth, to hear just where and why the admiral had failed, what he had done that had been wrong, how it was that he had allowed the Germans to escape.

The Admiralty was quite ready for candour. Since 1916 the navy's responsible men had smarted over the newspaper treatment of the Battle of Jutland, the universal willingness to believe Berlin's statements in preference to those of Whitehall, and the flood of criticism which had explained Jutland's "loss" without any knowledge of the details of the battle.

In those golden days of peace a few weeks after the Armistice, the Admiralty decided to publish a straightforward, comprehensible "Official Record of the Battle of Jutland," in which the details and progress of the engagement should be recorded in chronological narrative form, supported by all the previously suppressed information, and amplified by carefully compiled, accurate track-charts showing the movements of all ships throughout the action.

Accuracy and frankness were the sole desire. The events had been so clouded by falsehood and speculation that only indisputable facts could re-establish the solid foundation of truth.

At that time there were already clearly established "Jellicoe" and "Beatty" schools within the Royal Navy, built up about personal loyalty to the striking and powerful personalities of the two men, and of varying sympathy for their markedly different conceptions of command and leadership. The "Beatty" school magnified physical courage as the most desirable of all military attributes, and believed in active combat, the blind, "bull-dog" attack to the death; it found numerous

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adherents among the younger officers, to whom Beatty's career exemplified the triumph of brilliance and dash. The "Jellicoe" school regarded physical courage as a matter of course, and held spiritual courage, decisive reasoning, to be sounder guides than pure combative instinct in battle and war. The adherents of the "Jellicoe" school were numerous among the more mature and experienced officers, and it was fortified by a considerable number of men who had been passed over by Beatty in his rush to the top, and who instinctively considered him as both junior to and less capable than themselves.

Each of these schools felt its chosen leader to be an outstanding naval genius, but was inclined to disparage the leader of the other as an average man who might have been replaced by any one of twenty or thirty admirals. Neither school was temperamentally disposed, in reviewing an episode like the Battle of Jutland, to consider the behaviour of the "other" leader with particular admiration.

These conflicting temperaments ran through the entire strata of British life, as they do in most nations of diverse roots. Britain, fortunate in possessing them, had found that they supported each other admirably during the war, when they were held together by the common foe. Now that the war was over, they were free to resume their age-old clash of ideas and ideals.

So far as its military side was concerned, the war-time Admiralty had been dominated by men of the "Jellicoe" school, drawn there for their strategical and intellectual brilliance, often against their own wish for more active duty. More—the Admiralty of 1918 and 1919 was still strongly influenced by Jellicoe the individual. Many of the officers had come there at his desire, while he was First Sea Lord. The present First Sea Lord, Admiral Lord Wester-Wemyss, had worked hand in hand with Jellicoe as Deputy First Sea Lord before succeeding him.

It was natural that among the Jutland truths which the Admiralty wished to establish in the "Official Record," the

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truth concerning Jellicoe's part in the battle was foremost—and that this truth was not the mixture of scandal, gossip and criticism which the public expected to hear. The Admiralty, through sympathy, through conviction, and through regard for the facts, had no interest in perpetuating the newspaper myths of 1916. The public might discover a considerable number of items disappointing to British pride, such as the previously unrevealed facts relative to the performance of the much-publicized battle-cruisers, but as to the conduct of the Commander-in-Chief there was nothing that could not be admired and approved. The time had come to make definite statements. The Admiralty, if it had much to reveal that was disappointing, had more that was praiseworthy and cause for pleasure.

Preparation of the "Official Record" was put into the hands of a board of capable officers, headed by Captain J. E. T. Harper, who worked for several months during 1919 examining the mass of battle evidence, delving through the reports and war diaries, the signal records and charts of all the dozens of ships which had taken part in the action, correcting navigational errors, painstakingly establishing the time at which each of the hundreds upon hundreds of signals was sent and received, examining the gunnery records, pondering the German evidence—in short, the first great herculean labour of reducing the chaos of Jutland information to order. It was at this time that the position of the sunken *Invincible* was relocated, as a check upon the accuracy of the battle-tracks.

Parliament was notified that the work was going on, and the Government made a definite promise of early publication. Britain looked forward to the revelation of all the battle's secrets, feeling a confident, if unjustified, premonition as to what the secrets would be.

But before the "Official Record"—which came to be known as the "Harper Record"—could be published, there was a sweeping change in leadership at the Admiralty. Admiral Beatty, now Admiral of the Fleet, Earl Beatty of Brooksby, Viscount Borrodale of Wesford, Baron of the North Sea, succeeded

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Admiral Lord Wester-Wemyss as First Sea Lord. It was November 1, 1919, and Beatty, idolized by the nation, was mounting the last step in his spectacular progress up the naval ladder. The resultant changes of Admiralty personnel saw Whitehall dominated by officers of the "Beatty" school, to whom the "Harper Record," containing facts, seemed an invidious document.

The "Harper Record" failed to appear.

Delay in publication of the "Record" led to repeated questioning in Parliament, and also to requests that extensive additional material, dispatches, etc., be included in the volume. An official promise was made by the Government that Admiral Scheer's report to the German Emperor, made immediately after the High Sea Fleet's return to harbour, would be included in its entirety as an Appendix.

But the delay became prolonged and extended into 1920, while a series of Admiralty excuses, many of them contradictory, were given Parliament to account for the "Record's" non-appearance.

This presented fresh opportunity to the rumour mongers. Some sections of the Press hinted that the publication of Admiral Scheer's dispatch would sound the death-knell to any claim to British victory. Others suggested that it might expose the incompetence of the British naval leaders—the claim that Jellicoe was being "shielded" by the Admiralty found its way back into print.

Meantime, Lord Beatty's partisans had found literary outlet through the writings of a number of men whose admiration for the present First Sea Lord was equalled by their trained instinct for providing the public with the information it desired to hear. Catering to popular sentiment was an excellent road to success in journalism and politics, and the sequence of vigorously written books, magazine articles and newspaper items which appeared during the succeeding months and years, glorifying Lord Beatty and disparaging Lord Jellicoe, was largely the expression of the popular opinion of the day.

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Several distinctive features marked these publications and the part they played in the Jutland controversy. First, they manifested the almost passionate belief that Beatty could do no wrong. Second, they revealed a strong tendency to distort or misrepresent facts in favour of Beatty and to Jellicoe's disadvantage. Third, they displayed a growing vituperativeness whenever the name of Jellicoe was mentioned . . . the sledge of abuse beat upon the admiral with heavy strokes as, step by step, each stage in his conduct of the battle was torn apart—his strategy was damned, his deployment was condemned, he was accused of timidity and indecision, of "breaking off the action" before the enemy's torpedo attack, of tactical failure, of allowing the Germans a clear pathway back to Wilhelmshaven, of denying initiative to his subordinates, of every conceivable personal error short of misconduct, as reasons for the "loss" of the battle. At one moment in this campaign of detraction, a most influential, widely-circulated London newspaper gave prominence to the statement that the "secret" of Jutland was the fact that Jellicoe had never come to action with the enemy at all!

The authors came chiefly from that group of newspaper men, naval correspondents and politicians which had been hostile to the Admiralty and Jellicoe in 1916, and which had made up its mind that Jutland had been a British disgrace. In 1916 they had fostered the legends of the battle-cruiser successes, and made the demand that Jellicoe should be summoned to London to "explain the escape of the enemy."

But Lord Jellicoe found ardent supporters as well in the more conservative Press as among the naval people who possessed fuller knowledge of the battle than that common among the public.

Those who were still on active service in the navy were unable to express themselves in print for the time being, and the burden of Jellicoe's defence fell upon officers who had retired and were free to state their opinions.

At first the activities of the latter group concentrated in the

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plea for an accurate, impersonal Admiralty statement of the battle's facts. Until the facts were generally made known, all writings on the subject were prone to the distortion unfair to any of the commanders.

In November, 1920, a year after it had been promised to the nation, the "Official (Harper) Record" had still failed to appear. In December, Lord Wester-Wemyss, who was familiar with the "Record's" contents and had ordered its compilation during his term of office as First Sea Lord, wrote to the Press regretting that the Admiralty still withheld publication.

Admiral Sir Francis Bridgeman, likewise a former First Sea Lord, supported Lord Wester-Wemyss's demand that the "Record" be released, and stated in his letter that Admiral Lord Jellicoe had asked "strongly, and still asks," that it be published.

One newspaper affirmed that Lord Jellicoe, recently appointed Governor-General of New Zealand, had given full consent to publication of the "Record" as originally compiled, before leaving to take up his overseas duties.

The whole of the Press united in the demand for an official revelation of the facts, each faction confident that its chosen admiral would be favoured by the publication. The "Harper Record" had become celebrated—a bone of contention, a "mystery" second only to that of the battle. Four years and a half had elapsed since the day of action, and interest had been kept alive and tense as ever by the prolonged silence and mysterious behaviour which had marked Whitehall's attitude from the beginning.

In November, 1920, after pressure from all quarters, Mr. Lloyd George announced that if the facts as to Jutland were really desired, the Government was willing to publish all the reports, dispatches, signals and diagrams connected with the battle. The nation concluded this to mean that the "Record's" appearance was imminent.

But the voluminous tome presented to the world a month

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later, titled "Jutland Dispatches," though tremendously valuable to the research historian, was utterly incomprehensible to the general public—a heterogeneous collection of scores of documents, thousands of signal messages of all degrees of importance from trivial to vital, dozens of diagrams, accurate and inaccurate, all matter of a highly technical character lumped together without explanatory notes—in short, most of the rough material over which the Harper Board had found it necessary to work for several months to reduce to order and intelligibility as the "Official Record."

Of the "Record" itself there was no trace.

The "Jutland controversy" found fresh fuel heaped upon its wordy fires as every interested writer set out to cull material in favour of his cause from this enigmatic publication which breathed the very smoke of Jutland—but offered no solution to its "mystery."

Here was the list of signals . . . "*Urgent! Priority! . . .*" . . . "*Enemy in sight; am attacking! . . .*"

A sensation! "*Submit van of battleships follow battle-cruisers. We can then cut off whole of enemy Battle Fleet.*"

Somewhere, buried in this volume, was the truth—bitter words spoken from the Press. . . .

The *Globe*—"A vast mass of undigested facts, from which the layman cannot possibly disentangle the true history of this great sea fight. . . . It has been suggested in certain quarters that the real object of thus bewildering the reader is to spare the feelings of Lord Jellicoe. This we do not believe."

The *Times*—"The publication of the Jutland papers renders the publication of the 'Harper Record' not less, but more necessary. It should be produced without delay, and in its original form."

The *Morning Post*—" . . . never was a reputation more signally vindicated than the reputation so foully assailed of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Jellicoe . . . object of constant vindictive and culpably ignorant attack. . . . His traducers are now proved to be wrong in their statements. . . ."

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The Admiralty's post-war part in the Jutland controversy had begun with the suppression of the "Harper Record" and continued with the publication of the "Jutland Dispatches"—the latter step taken in the hope that it would silence the clamour for official information.

Now a positive step was taken—the preparation of an official Admiralty publication presenting the case for the "Beatty" school, as a substitute for the "Harper Record."

There were two of these efforts. The first, called the "Staff Appreciation," miscarried and never saw the light of print. Admiral Jellicoe, alluding to it on a later occasion, referred to the "many notable inaccuracies which it contained." Announcement had been made that it was in preparation, and the Press had held forth hopes that it would clear the air, but it was too obviously partisan for release, and was suppressed, to add to the "mystery."

The second, entitled "Narrative of the Battle of Jutland," appeared in 1924, to a certain extent as an answer to the Committee of Imperial Defence's "Official History." The partisan nature of the "Narrative" was emphasized by the fact that, in an Appendix, Lord Jellicoe replied to a number of the statements made in the main text, and that the Admiralty saw fit to counter the Jellicoe remarks with controversial and contentious footnotes.

Long afterwards, in 1927, the Admiralty finally released the "Harper Record," at the time when Admiral Harper retired from active duty and his book, "The Truth About Jutland," was announced. At this late date the Jutland controversy was still an active factor in English life, and members of Parliament were still able to command attention by demanding Jutland facts. And even then the "Record" as released was not in its original text, and the Admiralty declined official responsibility for its contents.

Meantime, both Commanders-in-Chief, Jellicoe and Scheer, had published books dealing with the activities of their fleets

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during the World War, including discussions and descriptions of the Battle of Jutland.

These books, appearing in 1919 and 1920, while important as revelations of the commanders' opinions, suffered from a common disadvantage—both of them were prepared before detailed information of enemy movements and tactics was available, and the portions of them dealing with such matters were based upon surmise and war-time intelligence.

Jellicoe wrote without knowledge that Scheer had employed the "*Kehrtwendung*" manœuvre. Scheer wrote upon the assumption that the British fleet had appeared from the east (where Hood was first encountered), and that Jellicoe had withdrawn his dreadnoughts from the field at nightfall. The charts and diagrams accompanying both books were accurate in so far as each commander's own movements were concerned, but extremely vague and general as concerned the enemy.

The admirals had been impelled by similar motives in this early publication of their memoirs—a public-spirited desire to impress the naval lessons of the war upon their countrymen while the subject was still fresh in national consciousness. Jellicoe dwelt upon the great peril Britain had undergone through lack of preparedness; Scheer attempted to awaken his people to the value of sea-power.

Neither Jellicoe's "The Grand Fleet, 1914-1916," nor Scheer's "Germany's High Sea Fleet in the World War," had a fortunate effect upon the British public, and neither dampened the Jutland controversy. Scheer was rather unjustly discounted, because British readers considered the many mistakes he made in discussing British movements to be deliberate prevarications, and judged his account of German operations by the same standard. As to Jellicoe's book, it was the modest narrative of a great leader, but in the atmosphere of 1920 it was generally received as the "apology" of an admiral whose success had been less than the nation expected.

The true turning-point in the Jutland controversy came with

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the publication, in 1923 and 1925, of the British and German Official Histories of war-time naval operations, when the volumes dealing with Jutland appeared.

The British history, prepared under the auspices of the Committee of Imperial Defence, had as its author the late Sir Julian Corbett, a most noted naval historian, who had had the benefit of an efficient staff and full insight into the Admiralty archives (although the Admiralty declined responsibility for the work). The German history, published by the Naval Archives in Berlin, had been prepared by *Fregattenkapitän* O. Groos (navigator of the *Von der Tann* at Jutland), under the supervision of Vice-Admiral Dr. E. von Mantey (Ret.).

In these books, for the first time, the full facts and details of the Battle of Jutland were made known. They contained, moreover, almost the first objective treatment of the relative merits of Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty in their conduct of the British forces.

The most significant information which they released to the world was that hitherto closely-guarded secret—the extremely trivial damage done by the British battle-cruisers during the early part of the action, while the Germans were punishing them at will—the fatal effects of Beatty's failure to concentrate his forces, his willingness to leave the Fifth Battle Squadron behind while he pushed on to action against a force that proved superior in construction and fighting ability.

This was at utter variance with the version of Jutland so widely believed in England.

In addition, full light was thrown on the details of the Grand Fleet's deployment, Jellicoe's tactics and strategy, and all the problem of the vast, complex situation. Many of Jellicoe's decisions, hitherto incomprehensible, became clear and obvious in the light of the enemy movements they were intended to counter.

The German history was naturally written from the German point of view, and was intended to prove the case for Scheer and a German victory. In spite of considerable fallacious reasoning

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on this score, and a generous measure of war and post-war hostility to Britain, it was extremely valuable in its unconscious revelation of the High Sea Fleet's complete helplessness after Jellicoe appeared on the scene.

Two further books, both products of the "Jellicoe" school, aided in presenting the revised and more accurate version of the Battle of Jutland to the British public. In addition, now that the facts of the battle were available, the early chorus of newspaper misrepresentation slowly diminished and finally disappeared.

"The Jutland Scandal," by Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, appeared in 1925, when the "controversy" was at its bitterest stage of accusation and counter-accusation. Spurred to appearance by indignation over the attacks upon Lord Jellicoe in the Press, it was a fierce and partisan defence of the Commander-in-Chief's conduct of the Jutland battle, and an unveiled attack upon Lord Beatty as responsible for the battle-cruisers' defeat. The book burst upon the public as one of the sensations of its day, only to be withdrawn from publication on the legal application of Mr. Filson Young and the *Sunday Express*, who had been prominently mentioned in discussing the "scandal" of the newspaper attitude, and who claimed infringement of copyright for unauthorized quotation of published material.

Two years later "The Jutland Scandal" was followed by Admiral Harper's "The Truth About Jutland," which likewise examined the tactics of Admirals Jellicoe and Beatty in the light of full knowledge as to Jutland's details, and presented a thoroughly documented history of the controversy, with detailed replies to the claims and misstatements of Lord Jellicoe's attackers.

From the beginning the Jutland controversy was a storm of public sentiment based upon ignorance, rumour, half-truth and supposition, born in the dark days of 1916, nurtured through the remainder of the war, and brought to a climax by the post-war official attitude.

At bottom it was no more than the attempt to find rational

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explanations for events which had been clouded in mystery at the time they took place.

The efforts to explain them by damning Jellicoe, and the protests that Beatty had had the proper solution to Jutland's tactics, collapsed with the revelation of the true power and resourcefulness of the enemy fleet, and the extreme ineffectuality of sheer storming tactics.

The spread of the truth required the acceptance of new views and the realization that many of the first, hasty judgments had been wrong—that the war leadership had been a task for great men, masterful commanders, and that there had been no simple pathway to victory.

Neither Lord Jellicoe nor Lord Beatty took an active part in the disputes and recriminations of the controversy. Jellicoe's silence was broken only once, in the Appendix which he prepared for the Admiralty "Narrative," when he spoke more in defence of his subordinates than of himself. In 1925, after his return from the Governor-Generalship of New Zealand, he was created Earl Jellicoe and Viscount Brocas of Southampton, in belated recognition of the true magnitude of his war services—an elevation heartily welcomed by his friends, who had always felt the disparity between his rank and that awarded Lord Beatty to be a reflection upon the relative achievements of the two men.

In 1927 Lord Beatty completed his term of office as First Sea Lord and retired, having remained in the office longer than any man before him in the history of the Royal Navy.

Marked changes and innovations had taken place during his long regime at Whitehall—the arrival of "Conference Fleets," the swift development of aircraft carriers, the Spartan reduction of floating forces in pinched, post-war years. The admiral had been a successful First Sea Lord, effecting many savings in the expense of the floating establishment and maintaining the navy on a high and progressive plane.

Certain people had condemned his silence during the Jutland controversy on the ground that a word from him would have been sufficient to check the attacks upon Lord Jellicoe. Jellicoe's

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reserve and dignity were now warmly praised and admired, and he received a delayed rush of public appreciation.

Jellicoe and Beatty, two opposite poles, two historic characters, had each served the nation with all his individual being. Each had contributed an imperishable memory to the Royal Navy—one had carried on the tradition of great strategic admirals—the other had personified the instinctive warrior who flung aside all consideration to come to grips.

CHAPTER LII

GERMAN ATTITUDE

ACROSS the North Sea, in Germany, there was an extensive post-war literature dealing with the Battle of Jutland, produced chiefly by former officers of the Imperial Navy, who wanted to rehabilitate the mutinied High Sea Fleet in the eyes of the German people.

Almost all the German writings were distinguished by an unwillingness to accept Scheer's and Hipper's tactical successes as sufficient unto themselves, and the desire to prove that the battle had been, at every phase, a German victory.

Germany had nothing to be ashamed of in the facts of the Battle of Jutland, nor in the performance of the High Sea Fleet; but almost all the German writings on the war were coloured by the sting of the great national defeat. Affected profoundly by the wish that the catastrophe had not taken place, they exhibited certain inherent traits in the protest that there had really been no military defeat—the Imperial Army and the Imperial Navy had not been beaten; the nation's downfall had had nothing to do with military failure, but had been caused by the treason and collapse of the civilian population.

The mutinies which swept both fighting services at the end, and made the revolution possible, were considered as detached and separate from the moral breakdown of the German High Command in the face of the overwhelming enemy—they were ascribed to the persuasive powers of small revolutionary organizations in Berlin, aided by Moscow and the enemy propaganda.

The peculiar blindness with which they characterized Jutland as a German victory was part of this general, comprehensible unwillingness to look the distasteful military facts of the war in

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the face. It was manifest not only in the German writings, but in the attitude of the German Government in encouraging national anniversary celebrations of the "Skagerrak victory" on the 31st of May.

The German public continued in the confident belief that Scheer won at Skagerrak—that in a daring manner he had caught the great British fleet at will, inflicted heavy losses without particular damage to himself, and come home again unpursued—that from first to last he had dictated the terms to the enemy, that it was his behaviour which "forced" the British to sea, his decision which ended the battle, and his superior ability which returned the German fleet to harbour.

Few Germans find it possible to believe that Scheer was surprised at Jutland, that he never found the British fleet where he wanted it, that the fog was a greater asset to him than the "*Kehrtwendung*" manœuvres, that his attack was based upon lack of information, carried out with courage but with an impossible tactical arrangement, and that he was soundly defeated and sent home. . . . Few Germans understand that while Hipper had marked successes against Beatty, Scheer had none against Jellicoe.

Scheer was the only German leader connected with the High Sea Fleet who emerged from the war free from the taint either of 1914-15's disastrous inactivity, or 1918's mutinies and disgrace. He was the hero, and Jutland the show place, of the "true spirit" of the High Sea Fleet—the spirit of war which Germany's patriots wished to encourage and perpetuate, and re-establish in place of the naval "inferiority" of 1914 and the Marxist rebellion of Sailors' Unions and red revolution of 1917 and 1918.

The average German believed that had Scheer had the command in 1914 the fleet's history would have been brilliantly other than it was; that had he had the command in 1918 he would have quelled the mutinies; that at Jutland he not only twisted the Lion's tail, but administered a defeat of serious, if indefinite, consequences to Germany's enemies.

The Scheer-Skagerrak worship, with its parades and ceremonies, its self-hypnotic repetition of the "victory" pœans,

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was for the Germans a profitless form of self-deception, as a few of their historians pointed out in discussions of sea-power during the war.

But there was no question of sea-power in post-war Germany. The 1900 dreams of a dominant High Sea Fleet had vanished. The small post-war navy was the object of pride in the extremely high standard of its 15,000 picked officers and men, but it would take many years to reconvince the nation of the wisdom of spending colossal sums for aggressive naval weapons.

Only as propaganda for the "pocket battleships," and for relief from the harsh realities of every day, was the myth of the Skagerrak "victory" a useful one.

CHAPTER LIII

THE FUTURE

JUTLAND was the turning-point between two maritime epochs.

At Jutland steam navies came of age.

Every admiral present had been trained in sail. The dreadnought type was ten years old. The fleets of Fisher and von Tirpitz were experiments.

At Jutland they ceased to be experiments and became fighting actualities.

Almost every naval development which took place after the great fleet engagement, in all the navies on the seas, was directly influenced by the knowledge gained that day.

Great Britain's experiences became available, through the Alliance, to the navies of the United States, Japan, France, Italy and Russia. Germany's experiences passed to Austria-Hungary and Turkey, and reached foreign Powers through the detailed study made of German men-of-war after they were surrendered, and through intensive Intelligence work.

The "post-Jutland" battleship involved changes in armour, in gun-fire control, in the construction of hull and interior, in training and equipment. The "post-Jutland" fleet adopted new tactics, new methods of signalling and communication, and its efficiency was increased to a degree that would have seemed incredible on the morning of May 31, 1916. Jutland was the laboratory of dreadnought development. At Jutland, fleets ceased to be romantic and entered a grim and dreadful reality.

Had there been other general actions between the Grand Fleet and the High Sea Fleet the importance of Jutland might perhaps have diminished, and some of the "lessons" learned

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there might have altered in value. The peculiar conditions of the battle, the limitations placed upon eyesight, lent extraordinary and perhaps undue influence to the problems of reconnaissance and communication, and to gunnery against invisible targets—an unconscious assumption that the “next” naval battle would be fought under similar conditions.

Jutland led Britain first to the adoption of kite-balloons and then to the mounting of aeroplanes on turret-runways in her capital ships—direct steps toward the adoption of the catapult for the launching of aeroplane observers.

At Jutland, Germany had Zeppelins and Britain had the seaplane-carrier *Engadine*. Both were charged with aerial reconnaissance. Both failed. Though the Zeppelin was developed further, its evolution was halting compared to the rush with which the *Engadine* became the aircraft-carrier with her broad flying-deck, her squadrons of fighting, bombing, torpedo and scouting planes.

Jutland revised all ideas as to the military value of the torpedo, which had been the great innovation and the *bête noire* of naval warfare, and which after Jutland was reduced to a logical and proper place among the arms of the sea.

The battles which had taken place between steam vessels before Jutland had almost all, by their very immaturity, led to “freak” men-of-war. Lissa gave ships the exaggerated ram which distinguished them for half a century and was still carried by many vessels at Jutland. The *Monitor-Merrimac* contest sent forth generations of low-decked, unseaworthy vessels that persisted for years although the *Monitor* herself foundered in a gale to reveal her weaknesses. Tsu-Shima and the Battle of Santiago led to an over-emphasis of high-explosive shell and small quick-firing guns which affected both the German and British navies at Jutland.

Jutland, on the other hand, provided the last thrust into a new era of all-round mechanized fighting craft, scientifically prepared for offence, defence and mobility with cold, mathematical calculation of their powers. The post-war ships acquired

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an almost fabulous ability to receive and deliver blows, until there was a question whether fleet battles in the old manner were any longer possible—whether the destruction of any dreadnought would not take such an extended period of action, that the inevitable intervention of night, with all its factors of uncertainty, would throw naval warfare into a new realm of battles carried on for days—or broken off as Jutland was broken off.

Warships were tremendously expensive at the time of Jutland, but the lessons of the battle increased their cost four- and five-fold, by introducing equipment of a delicacy and elaborate nature only dimly imagined before. Automatic navigational instruments, electric fire-controls, anti-aircraft defences, extensive wireless apparatus—the list was long, each item new in expense.

Tremendous power-plants, mazes of electric installation, power to wage three-dimensional war. . . . Fleets became the most complex instruments of destruction produced by a complex civilization which found it impossible not to deal in destructive terms. The world went ahead into a future in which sea arms assumed more and more fantastic perfection, while sea-power retained all its age-old influence upon history.

Jutland caused Germany to resume unrestricted submarine warfare, and led, indirectly, to the entry of the United States as a participant in the world conflict.

Had Scheer won at Jutland, and been able to wage surface war successfully, the U-boat incidents which stirred the American public to arms would never have taken place, and the fighting upon the European continent would have involved far different factors and comparative strengths.

The High Sea Fleet's inactivity after the battle was at bottom responsible for the mutinies which appeared in the German Navy in 1917 and went on to destroy the fleet in 1918.

Jutland rightly came to be seen as the most important and fateful single military episode during the World War—the episode which had the greatest effect upon the era that followed.

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Less than twelve hours elapsed between the battle's first gun and its last—a fraction of time fraught with consequences.

Disappointment and misinformation led the British public to minimize and underestimate the battle. They could not realize that the "annihilation," which they had believed their fleet would achieve, had actually been accomplished—that the fleet of Germany would never strike, never menace Britain again; never so much as fire another gun in a North Sea battle—would come to its end in total surrender and destruction.

Jutland emerged to take its place beside Trafalgar as one of the very great milestones in British naval history.

One point the details of the battle revealed with an emphasis only heightened by time, and that was the extraordinary genius, the decisiveness, and the complete mastery of Jellicoe's strategy and tactics—and the magnificent manner in which the Grand Fleet was able to do what he asked of it under conditions which made performance all but impossible.

Honour to Scheer and Hipper, and to the High Sea Fleet.

Scheer and Hipper, like Beatty and his battle-cruisers, were parts of a great saga of the seas.

But to history the Battle of Jutland was to become synonymous with the name of Jellicoe and with British victory.

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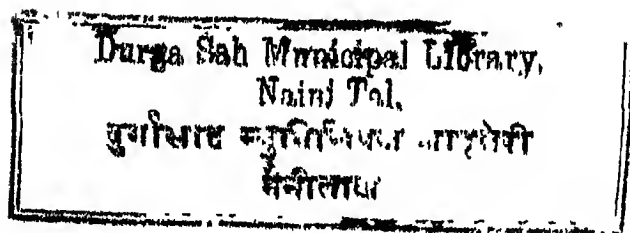
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